Lambda Book Report

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vol. 6.09 april 1998

a review of contemporary gay and lesbian literature

CELEBRATING POETRY MONTH

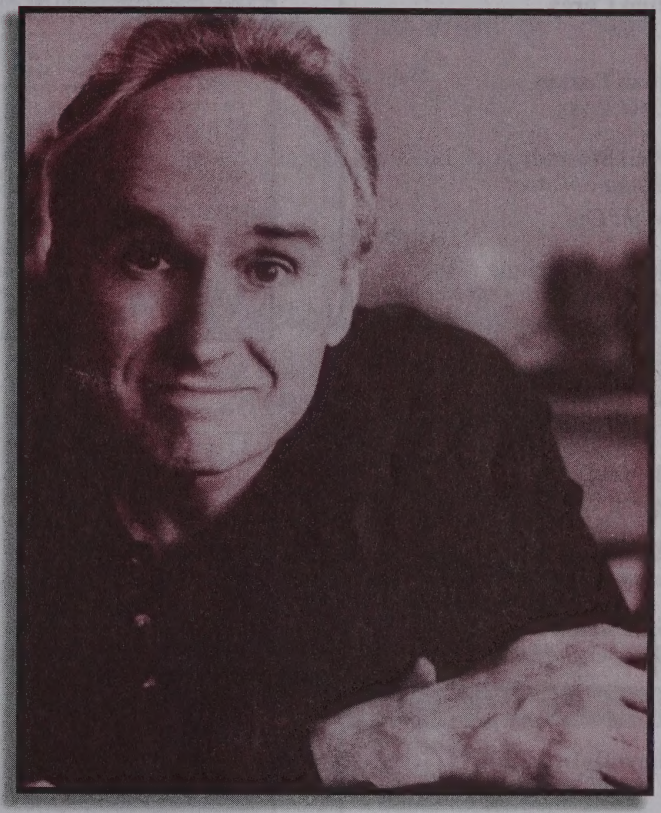
with

Frank Bidart's DESIRE
James Broughton's TRANSCENDENCE
Maureen Seaton's TRAIN STOPPING
Reynolds Price's SACRED EROS
Pat Califia's PUNCH
Carl Phillips' MIDWEST MUSINGS
Emma Donoghue's WOMEN
Walt Whitman's MEN

LESLEA NEWMAN
On Publishing Poetry

10TH ANNUAL LAMMY FINALISTS!

WITH REVIEWS BY:
Peter Klappert
Christine Cassidy
Kevin Killian
Jeannine DeLombard
Dennis Drabelle
Jeffrey Beam



Punishing Love

Tim Liu interviews Frank Bidart

Frank Bidart's latest book of poems, **Desire**, *has been shortlisted for a National Book Award, a National Book Critics Circle Award and a Lambda Literary Award. His earlier books of poems are collected in* ***In The Western Night****. Both of these volumes are published by FSG, the same publisher who has kept the poems of Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop in print. This interview was conducted at the Cafe Paradiso in Cambridge, MA on January 2, 1998.*

Tim Liu: What are the major concerns in your new book, **Desire**?

–continued on page 6

Painted Leaf Press

Poetry

Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz
translated by Joan Larkin
and Jaime Manrique
Sor Juana's Love Poems

Tom Carey
Desire

Joan Larkin
Cold River

Paul Schmidt
Winter Solstice
Night Life

Jaime Manrique
My Night With • Mi Noche Con Federico García Lorca

Michael Lassell
A Flame for the Touch That Matters

Beatrix Gates
In the Open

Eugene Richie
Island Light

Star Black
October for Idas

Fiction

Jane DeLynn
Bad Sex Is Good

Jaime Manrique
Colombian Gold

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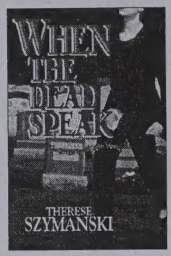

When the Dead Speak
A Brett Higgins Mystery
by Therese Szymanski

Having convinced the police and rival gang members that she is dead, former underworld figure Brett Higgins has moved to California and is living with her lover, Allie Sullivan, under the assumed name of "Samantha Peterson." The move out west gave her a chance to escape her brutal past and start over again.

Safe in Allie's arms, Sam almost believed that she could change her life as much as she had changed her name. But somewhere deep inside, Sam knew there had to be a price to pay for the trail of bodies they had left behind them. She had no idea how high that price would be. Until she found the gleaming butcher's knife and the blood-soaked clothes.

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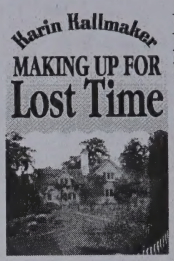

Making Up for Lost Time
by Karin Kallmaker

Master Chef Jamie Onassis has bought a beautiful country inn she plans to turn into a five-star restaurant. Unfortunately, the inn turns is a "handyman's special" and, without the skills or capital to make the necessary repairs, Jamie risks losing everything.

Home and garden expert Valkyrie Valentine is a seemingly perfect homemaker, Valkyrie seems destined to become the next Martha Stewart — as long as no one discovers her embarrassing little secret: she can't cook.

Reporter Sheila Thintowski is a woman on a mission. Ever since meeting the dazzling, dynamic Valkyrie, she's been determined to interview her up-close and extremely personally. Sheila suspects that Valkyrie's hands-on skills extend beyond home improvement and she's looking for private lessons.

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Lambda Book Report
vol. 6.09
april 1998
a review of contemporary gay and lesbian literature

Thora
from **The Shared Heart**
reviewed by Nancy Garden
on page 36

departments

Editor's Corner 4
Bestsellers 5
On Publishing 21
Author Queries 36
Classifieds 36
WordGaymes 38

cover photo of Frank Bidart by Jerry Bauer

Lambda Book Report vol. 6. no. 9, April 1998 (ISSN 1048-9487) is published monthly (12 issues) by the Lambda Literary Foundation, a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation organized for literary and educational purposes, 1773 T. St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 (202) 462-7924.
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POSTMASTER: send address changes to Lambda Book Report, PO Box 73910, Washington, D. C. 20056-3910

main features

1 ***Punishing Love***
Timothy Liu interviews Frank Bidart

9 ***Lambda Literary Award Finalists***

10 ***Stopping the Train***
Debra Weinstein talks with Maureen Seaton

15 ***Symbolic Changes***
Karen Helfrich talks with Carl Phillips

featured books

9 ***Desire*** *by Frank Bidart*
reviewed by Daphne Kutzer

10 ***Packing Up for Paradise*** *by James Broughton*
reviewed by Kevin Killian

12 ***Poems Between Women*** *edited by Emma Donoghue*
reviewed by Debra Weinstein

13 ***The Collected Poems*** *by Reynolds Price*
reviewed by Thomas Long

16 ***Diesel Fuel*** *by Pat Califia*
reviewed by Christine Cassidy

16 ***Stein, Bishop & Rich*** *by Maragaret Dickie*
reviewed by Peter Klappert

18 ***Night Life*** *by Paul Schmidt*
reviewed by Jennifer Coleman

19 ***Whitman's Men*** *by David Groff and Richard Bergman;*
Salute, Walt Whitman *by Duane Michals*
reviewed by Jose Villarrubia

Editors' Corner

by Kanani Kauka

Welcome to our annual-ish Do Not Be Afraid of Poetry issue. Many of you fear poetry, as I once did. I was so wedded to the format of paragraphs, dialogue, and narrative that poetry terrified me; it seemed so hard to read, and harder to understand. But I have been saved, and you can be too, in three easy steps.

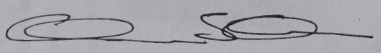
Step one: Read this issue. From National Book Award finalist Frank Bidart to ask-me-anything-about-scary-sex-stuff novelist, essayist, and now poet Pat Califia, there's something in here for just about everyone. Check out the interviews with poets Carl Phillips (page 15) and Maureen Seaton (page 11), in which they talk about their craft. You can ride the arc in Emma Donoghue's Collection **Poems Between Women** (reviewed on page 11), or you can enjoy the photographs inspired by the poetry of Walt Whitman in **Whitman's Men** and **Salute, Walt Whitman** (reviewed on page 19). These poets cover everything: sex, death, love, desire, fear, despair...What more could you ask for?

Step two: Choose a book reviewed in this issue and read it. If you are afraid of poetry, the best way to read it is aloud. Suddenly, all those previously terrifying and incomprehensible line breaks and stanzas come to seem natural. Suddenly, it's amazing to discover the imagery and emotion a good poet can put into a few lines.

Step three: Go to a poetry reading. There is nothing like hearing poetry read by the poet who wrote it. Remember story hour in the library when you were a little kid? How completely captivating and involving it was to be read to? Poetry readings are like that. And if you go to a poetry reading and you hate it, it doesn't mean you hate poetry—maybe you just hated that poet. Go to a different one. Poetry comes in a ton of different flavors, and chances are there's at least one out there that you'll like. By the time you read this issue, the OutWrite writers' conference will have happened, and if you were there I hope you went to the poetry slam: the first one was raucous, hilarious, joyful, and completely jammed. A poetry slam will shatter any image you may have of poetry as some stodgy, boring thing that only people with too many letters after their names can like. Cliché, but true: poetry *is* for everybody.

Changes in the house: We extend a warm welcome to our new advertising and marketing director, Robert Costello. Some of you may have met Robert at our Behind the Masks conference last fall, at which he volunteered. He hails from Boston originally, and has been in the Washington area for eight years. He brings both publishing and marketing experience with him from his job in marketing and advertising at the Medical Economics publishing company in New Jersey, and he has lots of fundraising experience, thanks to his volunteering with the Centaur Motorcycle Club (which sponsor's D.C.'s leather weekend, and for which he is recording secretary). During Robert's first week with us, we kept him frantically busy during the day—calling publishers for judges' copies of Lammy finalists, learning Quark™ and Photoshop™, figuring out how to use our phones, computers, the fax machine, the microwave, etc.—and his nights were dedicated to what was surely the most fantastic cake ever baked, which took him 36 hours to make, and which won first prize at the 27th Annual Scarlett's Bake Sale, a charity event that benefitted the local g/l/b/t youth organization. We hope that we will soon benefit from any "mistakes" in his kitchen.

Last, but definitely not least: the American Booksellers' Association, in recognition of the work that the Lambda Literary Awards and the Lambda Literary Foundation do on behalf of independent bookstores and publishers, recently awarded us our first grant, in the amount of $10,000 over two years. This will help us get a headstart on this year's—and next's—Lammys. Thank you, ABA!



Lambda Book Report
a review of contemporary gay and lesbian literature

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Member ALTERNATIVE PRESS INDEX

Printed in the United States

Readers' Forum

More Errata

This letter is in reference to the birthday tribute to the Naiad Press by Bonnie Ruth Beebe in the February issue of the *Book Report*

It is a well-done article and Bonnie called me prior to writing it to obtain information from me about the genesis of the Naiad Press. However, in the text published there are several serious omissions of fact, which gives a distorted picture. I would like to call attention to the following:

The idea for the press was mine. For two years I was the sole proprietor and its activities, such as they were, were covered in my federal income tax returns for 1972 and 1973. In 1974 Muriel Crawford and I incorporated the company as a Delaware corporation, with ourselves and Barbara Grier, and, shortly thereafter, Donna McBride as shareholders. The company remained in this form and I was its president until 1995.

During the first ten years or so, my novels (published under the pseudonym of Sarah Aldridge) provided a large portion of the revenue of the pres. During that period I did not take royalties. The popularity of the Sarah Aldridge novels had a significant bearing on the early success of the press as a publisher of lesbian fiction.

The Naiad Press now has an unassailable position as the largest and probably the oldest surviving lesbian publishing house in the world, with the largest number of books published and the widest popularity. This great commercial success is Barbara Grier's achievement.

I think the substance of my comments on the article should be brought to your readers' attention.

Anyda Marchant
Rehoboth Beach, DE

Readers are encouraged to comment on any aspect of Lambda Book Report. Name, address and phone number are requested for verification of authenticity. We reserve the right to edit or shorten letters.

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Call the secret Lammy hotline at (202) 462-7924. Whisper your password (found on your AMEX, VISA, MC etc. credit card), and show up at the Midland Hotel in Chicago on May 29. We'll tell you who won.

Bestsellers

March 1998

BOOKS WOMEN LIKE

1. **She Came to the Castro** by Mary Wings. Berkley, $5.99
2. **Paradise** by Toni Morrison. Knopf, $25.00
3. **Old Black Magic** by Jaye Maiman. Naiad, $11.95
4. **By Reservation Only** by Jackie Calhoun. Naiad, $11.95
5. **Liberty Square** by Katherine V. Forrest. Berkley, $5.99
6. **Chain Letter** by Claire McNab. Naiad, $11.95
7. **Married Women who Love Women** by Storch. Bantam, $23.95
8. **Love Shook My Heart** ed. by Irene Zahava. Alyson, $10.95
9. **Gone is the Shame** by Marti Hohmann. Masquerade, $9.95
10. **Radclyffe Hall**, by Sally Cline. Overlook Press, $32.50

BOOKS MEN LIKE

1. **The Gay Metropolis** by Charles Kaiser. Houghton Mifflin, $27.00
2. **Jocks** by Dan Woog. Alyson, $12.95
3. **In the Flesh** by Gavin Geoffrey Dillard. Barricade, $23.95
4. **Burning Plain** by Michael Nava. Putnam, $23.95
5. **Billy's Boy** by Patricia Nell Warren. Wildcat, $29.95
6. **The Good Life** by Gordon Merrick. Alyson, $14.95
7. **The Mammoth Book of Gay Erotica** ed. by Lawrence Schimmel. Carol & Graf, $10.95
8. **Best of the Superstars** by John Patrick. STARbooks, $10.95
9. **Pages Passed from Hand to Hand** ed. by Mark Mitchell and David Leavitt. Mariner Books, $18.00
10. **Alec Balcwin Doesn't Love Me** by Michael Thomas Ford. Alysron, $10.95

BOOKS EVERYONE LIKES

1. **Stealing Jesus** by Bruce Bawer. Crown, $26.00
2. **What the Bible *Really* Says About Homosexuality** by Daniel Helminiak. Alamo Square, $9.95
3. **My Gender Workbook** by Kate Bornstein. Routledge, $17.95
4. **Barbie Unbound** by Sarah Strohmeyer. New Victoria, $12.95
5. **Mommie Dearest** by Christina Crawford. Seven Springs, $19.95
6. **Cyber Socket: the gay net directory** by Gaynet. Gaynet Directory, $12.95
7. **Intimacy Dance** by Betty Berzon. Plume, $12.95
8. **Gay Finances in a Straight World** by Peter M. Berkery,Jr. Lasser, $19.95.00
9. **Read My Lips** by Riki Anne Wilchins. Firebrand, $16.95
10 **Sex Tips for Straight Women** by Dan Anderson & Maggie Berman. Regan, $16.00

This best-seller list was compiled from information submitted by A Different Light Bookstores (Los Angeles, CA, New York, NY, and San Francisco, CA), Giovanni's Room (Philadelphia, PA), Lambda Rising Bookstores (Washington, DC, Baltimore, MD, Rehoboth Beach, DE, and Norfolk, VA), and White Rabbit Books (Raleigh, NC) and reflects sales in late January and early February 1998.

Punishing Love

– *continued from page 1*

Frank Bidart: I think "The Second Hour of the Night" is a poem I've been trying to write all my life. I wanted to push as far as I could at the lines: "children who have watched their parents' / blighted lives blighted in the service of Venus / must punish love itself." I wanted to write a poem that questioned love, and in some sense, to punish love as far as one could—and see what remained. Not out of the illusion that one could destroy the desire for love, but to devour as many sentimentalities and delusional aspects as possible, certainly to question the traditional assumptions about love. We live in a culture that is incredibly sentimental about love. Movie after movie suggests that love is the answer, that things get resolved through love.

TL: Have you seen *Titanic*?

FB: I haven't. My point is not that love is unimportant. On the contrary, it's tremendously important, central. The poem partly wants to acknowledge that this thing which is connected to ecstasy, to a sense of transcendence, something that moves a part of oneself as nothing else does, is also not chosen. Often there is an unwilled component of it, and often one feels that the objects of one's love are ill-chosen. As if something has chosen them for one.

TL: Do you feel that the love we experience in our adult life is entangled in our early childhood experiences?

FB: Absolutely. It's not that I have some secretly deterministic view of these things—I think there are mysteries here, and I think our culture, very early, gives us certain ideal types that are to be desired, personality types as well as body types. Obviously, it has an immense amount to do with childhood and parents. I think kids very often live the unlived lives of their parents. That's true in erotic terms as well as career terms, in terms of one's work.

TL: The poems you've written about your mother—"Elegy," "Confessional" and "The Second Hour of the Night"—seem to be a lifelong project, marking a trajectory that moves on out from the personal into the archetypal.

FB: I think any good poem has to, somewhere in it, touch the general. Or a word that is more fashionable: the impersonal. The mystery of art is that something that is specific can also be felt as universal, and that happens whether the material you're dealing with is autobiographical or not. The myth in "The Second Hour of the Night" about Myrrha and her father is very specific. In the poem, this is not just an archetypal father, this is a very particular father with a particular character. Myrrha is not every daughter, she is a human being who has very particular emotions, and yet, I think universal things get embodied in the narrative. If you could see anything deeply enough, you would apprehend the universal in it. One of the thrilling things about a writer like Frank O'Hara is that he makes you apprehend something that you never thought could be part of a poem, something that's alive, not just wildly specific, something that becomes part of a significant drama or movement of the psyche, and it's about the simplest things: being in Times Square or having a hot dog or going to a bookstore.

TL: How would you extend these ideas to a "found" poem? In your poem "Adolescence," I understand that its originating source was not poetic at all.

FB: No, not at all. It's prose. It's from the Gay Sunshine Series of re-publications of material from that great pamphlet series called **Straight to Hell**, edited by Boyd McDonald. **Straight to Hell** seems to me a brilliant and profound enterprise. What Boyd McDonald did was collect anonymous erotic narratives. In reading one of them, I realized that if you cut out the very explicit sexual details, there was something more expressive and haunting and, in a kind of funny way, sexy, than when the passage had all the anatomy in it. And that's what I did. What was left was what seemed to me very haunting sentences that implied a great deal about the sexual specifics but didn't say them. So it was a question of carving away material and feeling how the words left could be set off in lines. The other act of making in the poem is of course to put a title on it. The title "Adolescence" tries to frame and place the kind of experience in the poem, assert that it has to do with an essential stage of life—being on the edge of sexual awareness.

TL: Whether we are looking at a collage made from pieces of ponographic prose or a translation of a two-line poem by Catullus, your work seems to answer our own times, a time when people are dying from sex. Do you see poetry itself as a kind of redemptive act?

FB: It depends on what you mean by redemptive. A poem takes a reader on a journey. If the journey is significant enough, and deep enough, the author is changed by going on the journey, and the reader is too. It's not only works of art that help me understand my life, but they certainly have been a crucial part of it. From the point of view of someone writing, I don't scorn the idea of writing as therapy, but the fact is, something is only good therapy if it's good art. It can only be good art if it gets to the bottom of something. It's not going to be good art if it's just sentimentalizing or self-justifying, if it's only a narrative of one's own victimization. That isn't good therapy either! If you can get to the bottom of something and fully embody that, you have at least the possibility of making good art. I certainly feel changed by having written the poems I have written. I don't want to be too glib in stating how. If a work of art gives the reader the sensation that you have been on a journey in which you have penetrated deeply into something, that process lodges in the reader. The only way we are freed from anything is not by repressing it or looking the other way but by getting to the bottom of it, perceiving it, trying to understand it, and something like release can happen then. Not that one is totally changed, but one is released to some degree.

TL: Some of the tragic elements in your poems have meant a great deal to

me as a gay reader and writer, poems like "By these Waters" and "In the Western Night." Who do you think of as your ideal audience?

FB: I'm certainly aware that certain poems are going to have a more immediate resonance in terms of their subject matter with some people rather than others. But two of my friends who have most liked "In the Western Night" are straight. As I said earlier, in the mystery of art, if you get it right, the specific is felt as universal. I have very close friends who are gay and very close friends who are straight, and I have not felt a disparity in their responses. So I don't think of my audience as...well, at the most fundamental level, one is writing for oneself, trying to understand this thing as deeply as one can for oneself.

TL: Elizabeth Bishop resisted being included in anthologies by women writers. How do you feel about anthologies by gay writers?

FB: I certainly have been in gay anthologies—that's not an issue for me. Bishop told me that anthologies of women's poetry, when she began writing, were very bad, were mostly ghettos of rather sentimental verse. And she did not want to be thought of as a "woman poet." When she was young, the sort of enlightened position was to refuse to be in such books, to be simply thought of as a poet, as a writer. She felt that as she got to be older she couldn't change that position, that she couldn't just suddenly say, well now it's okay to be in one. When I began writing, there were no anthologies of gay writers. I think anthologies of lots of different kinds are great because I discover things in them. I see things I've never seen before.

TL: Some would say you lead a rather private life. If poems are actions deep enough within themselves, how would you feel about future readers looking into your personal biography for answers to questions they might have?

FB: If you like a writer, you inevitably want to know as much about their lives as you can find out. Since my second book, I've been entirely straight-forward about being gay. I've also written alot of poems that have been explicitly about my family, so I would never say my family is irrelevant to my poems. The relevance of some particular event in my life to a given poem is always complicated. But I do think it's inevitable that anything you know about a person's life, if you can see it profoundly enough, is going to affect your sense of the nature of the work and what kind of gesture or act the work is.

TL: Let's take Bishop's "One Art" as an example. People like to speculate whether the beloved in the poem is Lota or Alice.

FB: I think that's a debate that wholly proceeds from the fact that people didn't know enough about her life. She wrote the poem at a time when Alice was thinking of breaking up the relationship, and everyone who knew Elizabeth knew that. The whole poem is about a series of losses, so Lota is in there somewhere, but the immediate occasion was that period in her relationship with Alice.

TL: You're currently at work on editing Lowell's **Collected Poems**, which is no small task, and I'm wondering if it takes up all of your creative energies?

FB: I found I can only do the Lowell project if I keep the rest of my life at least to some degree alive. If I feel I'm no longer a writer, I feel obliterated, and that's not something Lowell would have ever wanted for me. So it's a balancing act, and in some ways I felt guilt for not being able to work on the Lowell project because, say, I had to finish my book. But on the other hand, unless I stayed alive as a writer and as a poet, I would not have been any good as an editor. The project would not have been sustainable.

TL: Are you able to do any of your own writing now?

FB: I've just written a little poem called "For The Twentieth-Century." It's very short, one page. This next summer, I plan to entirely devote to finishing the Lowell.

TL: As we look toward the next century, I wonder how you are responding to the recognition you are now receiving. **Desire** has already received a National Book Award nomination and is poised to be nominated for a Pulitzer Prize as well.

FB: As writers get older, if they don't get a certain amount of recognition, they often get embittered, and that process of embitterment can be as spiritually deforming as success. In worldly terms, the success that I have had has been enjoyable and not enjoyable. If you go somewhere as a visiting writer, there's always a mixture of things that give pleasure and things that are humiliating and the mix never goes away.

TL: And in what ways is success enabling?

FB: Ideally, I would like more time to do my work. But I have lived as a teacher and in fact have had a lot of time to do my work, and yes, there are moments during the school year when it's extremely difficult to do one's own work, but there are other times when one is remarkably free. So in a way I don't know how to answer the question. It's enabling partly by helping one avoid the sense of failure and embitterment that can happen to people as they get older. As I said, that can be a corrosive process. It's somehow very heartening to go somewhere and find there are people one does not know who have read the poems and the poems have mattered to them. I think it's also true that one's real readers, the readers you can truly know about and can have real communication with, remain a handful of people. One has to keep that alive. I think it's very dangerous to substitute the response or applause by an audience for that more intimate relationship with a handful of readers. If that happened, I think it would truly be a catastrophe, a catastrophe to one's work.

Timothy Liu's books of poems are ***Vox Angelica***, ***Burnt Offerings*** *(a 1995 Lammy finalist), and* ***Say Goodnight***, *a new book of poems just out from Copper Canyon Press.*

10th Annual Lambda Literary Awards

FINALISTS

LESBIAN FICTION
A Crystal Diary, Frankie Hucklenbroich, Firebrand
a/k/a, Ruthann Robson, St. Martin's
Beyond the Pale, Elana Dykewomon, Press Gang
Prozac Highway, Persimmon Blackbridge, Press Gang
Terminal Velocity, Blanche McCrary Boyd, Knopf

GAY FICTION
Gossip, Christopher Bram, Dutton
Plays Well With Others, Allan Gurganus, Knopf
The Far Euphrates, Aryeh Stollman, Putnam
The Farewell Symphony, Edmund White, Knopf
The House on Brooke Street, Neil Bartlett, Dutton

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Every Woman I've Ever Loved, ed. by Catherine Reid & Holly Iglesias, Cleis
Mrs. Keppel & Her Daughter, Diana Souhami, St. Martin's
Queerly Classed, ed. by Susan K. Raffo, South End
Sex and Sensibility, Arlene Stein, University of California

GAY STUDIES
Queer Representations, Martin Duberman, New York University
Gay Body, Mark Thompson, St. Martin's
Gay Metropolis, Charles Kaiser, Houghton Mifflin
Life Outside, Michelangelo Signorile, HarperCollins
Sexual Ecology, Gabriel Rotello, Dutton

LESBIAN POETRY
Cold River, Joan Larkin, Painted Leaf
Diesel Fuel, Pat Califia, Masquerade
Poems Between Women, ed. by Emma Donoghue, Columbia University
Queer Dog: Homo/Pup/Poetry, ed. by Gerry Gomez Pearlberg, Cleis
School of Fish, Eileen Myles, Black Sparrow

GAY POETRY
Beautiful Signor, Cyrus Cassells, Copper Canyon
Bite Hard, Justin Chin, Manic D
Desire, Frank Bidart, FS&G
Desire: Poems 1986-1997, Tom Carey, Painted Leaf
Packing Up for Paradise, James Broughton, ed. by Jim Cory, Black Sparrow

LESBIAN MYSTERY
Apparition Alley, Katherine V. Forrest, Berkley
Evil Dead Center, Carole laFavor, Firebrand
Father Forgive Me, Randye Lordon, Avon
No Daughter of the South, Cynthia Webb, New Victoria
Old Black Magic, Jaye Maiman, Naiad

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Hostage, R.D. Zimmerman, Delacorte
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The Burning Plain, Michael Nava, Putnam

LESBIAN AUTO/BIO
Blue Windows, Barbara Wilson, Picador
May Sarton: A Biography, Margaret Peters, Knopf
My Life As a Boy, Kim Chernin, Algonquin
The Last Time I Wore a Dress, Daphne Scholinski & Jane Adams, Putnam
Virginia Woolf, Hermione Lee, Knopf

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A House on the Ocean, A House on the Bay, Felice Picano, Faber & Faber
Gay Body, Mark Thompson, St. Martin's
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Walt Whitman: A Gay Life, Gary Schmidgall, Dutton

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Best Lesbian Erotica 1997 ed. by Tristan Taormino, Cleis
His(2), ed. by Robert Drake with Terry Wolverton, Faber & Faber
Jo's Girls, ed. by Christian McEwen, Beacon
Mammoth Book of Gay Short Stories, ed. by Peter Burton, Carroll & Graf

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Gay Men at the Millennium, ed. by Michel Lowenthal, Tarcher/Putnam
Lesbians Raising Sons, ed. by Jess Wells, Alyson
My Dear Boy, ed. by Rictor Norton, Leyland Publications
PoMoSexuals, ed. by Carol Queen & Lawrence Schimel, Cleis
Queers in Space, ed. by Gordan Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette & Yolanda Retter Bay

PHOTOGRAPHY/VISUAL ARTS
I Am My Lover, ed. by Joani Blank, Down There Press
John Waters: Director's Cut, John Waters, Scalo
Men Together, photographs by David Fields, Running Press
Naked Men, ed. by David Luddick, Universe Publishing
Particular Voices: Portraits of Gay and Lesbian Writers, Robert Giard, MIT

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Cassell's Encyclopedia of Queer Myth, Symbol, and Spirit, ed. by Rand P. Conner, Cassell
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Amy Asks A Question, Grandma, What's A Lesbian? Jeanne Arnold, Mother Courage
Blue Coyote, Liza Ketchum, Simon & Schuster
Sanctuary, Paul Monette, Scribner
The House You Pass On the Way, Jacqueline Woodson, Delacorte
The Shared Heart, Adam Mastoon, William Morrow

TRANSGENDER
Mema's House, Mexico City: On Transvestites, Queens, and Machos, Annick Prieur, University of Chicago
Read My Lips, Riki Anne Wilchins, Firebrand
Sex Changes, Pat Califia, Cleis
The Last Time I Wore a Dress, Daphne Scholinski & Jane Adams, Putnam
PoMoSexuals, ed. by Carol Queen & Lawrence Schimel, Cleis

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Beyond the Pale, Elana Dykewomon, Press Gang
Bite Hard, Justin Chin, Manic D
Does Your Mama Know?, ed. by Lisa C. Moore, Redbone
Toward a New Degeneracy, Bruce Benderson, Edgewise

DRAMA
Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde, Moises Kaufman, Vintage
Monsters in the Closet, Harry M. Benshoff, Manchester University
Porcelain & A Language of Their Own: Two Plays, Chay Yew, Grove
Rent, Jonathan Larson, Rob Weisbach Books
Three Plays by Mae West, ed. by Lillian Schlissel, Routledge

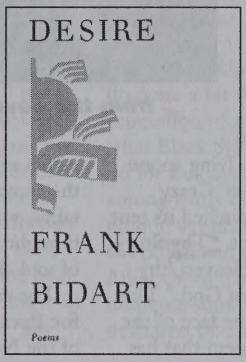
HUMOR
Barbie Unbound, Sarah Strohmeyer, New Victoria
Hot, Throbbing Dykes to Watch Out For, Alison Bechdel, Firebrand
Naked, David Sedaris, Little, Brown
Openly Bob, Bob Smith, Rob Weisbach Books
Flaming Iguanas, Erika Lopez, Simon & Schuster

"The Source of Ecstacy is not Chosen"

by Daphne Kutzer

Desire
by Frank Bidart
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
ISBN 0374138249
hardback $20.00, 59 pp.

Desire. Who of us has not fallen victim to desire that consumes us, destroys us, yet cannot be denied? Desire, as Frank Bidart knows, differs from love and passion, though it often cloaks itself in these garments. Bidart knows that "the source of ecstasy is not chosen," that desire chooses us, and not the other way around. He also knows that desire can be self-destructive, yet unavoidable. He knows that when most writers write of desire they write of sex, and not of the powerful, emotional undercurrents of desires both sanctioned and unsanctioned. This book of poems is a meditation upon both the personal effects of desire and upon desire's universal, timeless pull on individuals and upon the history those individuals make.



Bidart is passionate, focused, chiseled, and intense in these poems, and demands more attention and care than most contemporary readers of poetry are used to. The poems in this volume have echoes of Browning's dramatic monologues, of Shakespeare's plays, of opera, of myth and history. Yet the poems are not self-conscious about their learning, nor do they condescend to the reader who might not remember as much Ovid or Dante as Bidart does. They are brilliant, demanding poems.

The volume has two parts, a brief first section of shorter, more personal poems about desire, and a second, longer section made of a single poem, "The Second Hour of the Night." The first section includes the few overtly homosexual poems in the volume, although the underlying premise of the entire volume—that we cannot choose what will bring us to ecstasy, it chooses us—certainly resonates for gay readers. As Bidart says in "The Second Hour of the Night," "no creature is free to choose/what allows it its most powerful, and most secret, release."

"The Second Hour of the Night" is the heart of this book. Its central, longest section retells the myth of Myrrha, mother of Adonis, son of an incestuous union between father and daughter. In incantatory rhythms, Bidart tells us of Myrrha's long and secret sexual desire for her father; of her father's unconscious desire for his daughter; of Myrrha's attempt to escape her desire through death; and of her ultimate surrender to desire. She pleads with the gods, and is transformed into a tree that weeps bitter resin—myrrh. Her story, although seemingly safely in the mythological past, is not. There are allusions to Myrrah's connection to other Greek myths (particularly those of Cupid and Psyche and Daphne and Apollo) and to the long, complex strands of history influenced by Myrrah's actions—strands that by implication stretch forward into our own lives.

In a short review like this, I cannot possibly do justice to the beauty, horror, complexity, and passion of this poem, and indeed of all of Bidart's poetry. There is, in this volume, no cure to desire, not even death, because even if the desired dies, the desire does not. Bidart is a major American poetic voice, one that should be listened to with care.

Daphne Kutzer lives in upstate New York, where she has been teaching poetry for almost 20 years.

A Fact of Heaven

by Kevin Killian

Packing Up for Paradise: Selected Poems 1946-1996
by James Broughton
Black Sparrow
ISBN 1574230522
papberback $16.00, 330 pp.

James Broughton's earliest films were made in the years following World War II, and his masterpieces *Mother's Day*, *Four in the Afternoon*, and *The Pleasure Garden* (which won the "Prize for Poetic Film" at the

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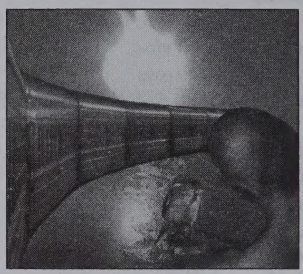
Featured Books

Cannes Film Festival in 1954, bestowed by no less august an eminence than Jean Cocteau) are today being re-evaluated and seen as equal to the very best films of his contemporaries, Kenneth Anger and Maya Deren. These films are a strange brew of sophisticated madness and a flighty, intuitive surrealism that might have been the product of a boyhood spent in Modesto, California. In Broughton's cinema, as in his poetry, the stable family unit is examined and blown apart as though by a Lacanian hurricane of power and deconstruction, and a floating and gleeful gang of survivors flicker by in frame after frame, imps of filmic ecstasy.

Broughton marks his eighty-fifth birthday this year with the publication of a new book of **Selected Poems**, for he is the rare artist who can do two things with equal ease and brio. This handsome book comes with a smart introduction by Jim Cory, one of many younger poets decisively influenced by the example of the master amorist. Sixteen sections, each with a different theme or bent, illustrate the panoply of Broughton's writing over the past fifty years (though a few of these sections contain only one lengthy piece). There are gatherings of hymns, of parables, of memoir, of folk fairy-tale material, of gloom and laughter.



from the cover

Like Whitman, Broughton takes the average materials of daily life and from them spins vast hymns of joy, exalting the body's capabilities and seeing in them clear analogues for the soul's machinery. In Broughton the sacred and profane are identical twins, quite comfortable lying spoon fashion in a bed like Yeats' Crazy Jane's—where love has pitched its tent in the place of excrement. "Thy flowering rod is the fact of Heaven,/thy bursting seed is the act of God." This is a poetry that flies in the face of the stately, dull workshop poem that has characterized American poetry over the last five decades—though I would not want to give my readers the impression that Broughton's poems aren't, by and large, as handsomely crafted as any academic poetry I know. (The loose, woolly transcendence of Allen Ginsberg's "First thought, best thought," is not for Broughton, though otherwise the two poets share much in common—the reverence for Blake, the concomitant spiritual vision which sees the world in a single rose, the serene, quirky acceptance of mortality, and the grounding of mystic thought in the commonplace objects of mid-century American life.)

The earliest poems in **Packing Up for Paradise** were written in the wake of the New Romanticism of Dylan

Stopping the Train: An Interview with Maureen Seaton

Maureen Seaton is the author of four books of poetry: ***The Sea Among the Cupboards***, ***Fear of Subways***, ***Furious Cooking***, *and (with Denise Duhamel)* ***Exquisite Politics***. ***Fear of Subways*** *was selected by Marilyn Hacker for the Eighth Mountain Poetry Prize, and* ***Furious Cooking*** *was awarded the 1997 Lambda Literary Award for Lesbian Poetry. The mother of two daughters, she lives in Chicago with her partner, Lori Anderson.*

Debra Weinstein: So, is there such a thing as a lesbian poet?

Maureen Seaton: There is such a thing as a lesbian—I know that!

DW: What is a lesbian poet?

MS: I don't know. Maybe it's about self-definition. I think there are some lesbian poets, people who consider themselves "lesbian poets." I do like thinking about a person's poetry in the context of their life. If I don't know if someone is lesbian or not, or black or white or whatever, it doesn't influence whether I like the poetry. But I like knowing facts about their lives. If I find out someone is a lesbian, I may come to the work with a different perspective, a different knowledge. That doesn't change my opinion of the poetry, but it will enrich it for me.

DW: Are you a...

MS: Do I consider myself a lesbian poet? No. But I am a lesbian and I am a poet and I am a woman and I feel like I write from all those perspectives. But I feel like women who call themselves "lesbian poets," I don't feel like I do that, whatever "that" is. I don't feel that when I write I am thinking "lesbian."...While I might not be doing the love/sexuality thing, I'm often doing the anger/justice thing. When I sit down, that's probably my agenda. I've been criticized for that.

DW: Well you started Furious Cooking with the image of Sinead O'Connor tearing up a picture of the Pope.

MS: Yes. I'm a little obsessed. Since I've been living in Chicago there is so much Christian stuff around me all the time—I used to be a little pissed and now I feel like it's wrecking the country. I believe that most of the pain in the world is caused by organized

Thomas and George Barker, and their lush, syntax-clotted metrics and imagistic tropes owe much to Thomas ("Ouched to reflower by a ribald summary,/ old fingertipping perfumes poison the hands"). Simultaneously Broughton was writing from the voice of a very young child, enjoying both the child's innocence and his polymorphous perversion, in a long series of poems drawn from the folklore trove of nursery rhyme, ballad meter, Anglo-Saxon riddle. A decided debt here, too, to the children's verse of Robert Louis Stevenson, W. S. Gilbert, A.A. Milne, Walter de la Mare, and Gertrude Stein. This poetry, derided as whimsy or worse by some critics, formed a powerful testament of resistance to Cold War laws of power, and state-mandated codes of sanity, sexual rigidity, and sameness.

Broughton's open sexuality was more or less an open secret in the San Francisco/Berkeley bohemia of the forties and fifties, but it exploded after meeting the young artist Joel Singer in the mid-1970s. His embrace of "gay liberation" coincided with a return to filmmaking and an increasingly explicit sexuality in his poetry. (I can recommend to you Broughton's diverting memoir **Coming Unbuttoned** as well as the revelatory interview in **Gay Sunshine Interviews** Vol. II.) Sometimes I wish I *was* Joel Singer—to whom these **Selected Poems** are dedicated. Who wouldn't want to have inspired lines like the following, which recount their meeting:

> *Are you mad? I said You are half my age*
> *Are you frightened of your fate? said He?*

Packing Up for Paradise should do quite a bit towards extending the reputation of a maverick poet. Think what Black Sparrow has been able to do for Bukowski, Myles, Chester, among many other brilliant and unique writers. James Broughton is the oldest and youngest poet in America—a Tiresian figure of immense stature, a Cheshire cat devoured by a vast smile.

Kevin Killian is the author of ***Shy and Bedrooms Have Windows*** *(both 1990). His new books are* ***Arctic Summer***, ***Little Men***, ***Argento Series*** *and a biography (written with Lew Ellingham),* ***Poet Be Like God: Jack Spicer and the San Francisco, Renaissance.***

Back Through Our Mothers

by Debra Weinstein

Poems Between Women: Four Centuries of Love, Romantic Friendship, and Desire
edited by Emma Donoghue
Columbia University Press
ISBN 0231109245
hardback $24.95, 209 pp.

"If we are women," Virginia Woolf wrote in **A Room of One's Own**, "we think back through our mothers." If

religion. So if you wanted to give me a label, maybe it would be a feminist poet or an anti-Catholic poet...But lately all these labels mean so little to me because I've been thinking more about language and form.

DW: And you can see that in **Furious Cooking**. They are dense poems.

MS: And they're that way consciously.

DW: It's a very different book from **Fear of Subways**, which seems to be charged with a flame, an anger.

MS: Part of me felt like I was burning out as I was writing it. During the two years I wrote the book, Lori and I were living in Harlem. People just knew instantly—because of our color and our lesbianism—that we were lovers, and we were threatened and harrassed everywhere—once at knifepoint. So I was angry, but I was also really scared.

DW: What accounts for the stylistic difference in the two books?

MS: Somehow after **Fear of Subways**, I decided my feelings were too transparent. Unlike Sharon Olds, who has a very angry edge, I don't think **Fear of Subways** had enough of that to protect me from the world. The book was much too out there, much too raw. So what I've done since then is to layer. And since I love language so much, and I love to play with it, what I've done is to embed the emotion within the language.

DW: How do you see women's poetry evolving?

MS: I think that there's something happening with journalling as a genre, collage as a genre. It's hard to articulate. But there's a new genre happening that feels very female to me. A vulnerability—a letting go of the preconceived. Women from California, Phillipine women, women of color, are bringing in new form, exploding form. When you read it you think this isn't fitting in anywhere and its true, it's fitting in everywhere.

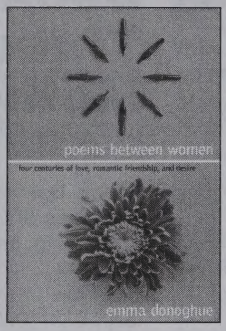
DW: Getting back to that anger/justice thing. There is a poem I really love in **Fear of Subways**. It is "Witness,"after a sculpture by Aristide Maillol, which shows a woman caught in a subway door. You write: If this vision seems mythical now ...it's not that the woman—young, my height, white dress, heels—fails to die. It's that my mouth, filled with dying women, fails to stop the train."

MS: Right. And that's why I write. I'm trying to stop the train.

—Debra Weinstein

Featured Books

we are women poets, who do we think back through—Emily Dickinson, Katherine Phillips, Sappho? "Men," Jane Austen told us in her novel, **Persuasion**, "have had every advantage of us in telling their own story...the pen has been in their hands." Now, late in the 20th century, we have **Poems Between Women: Four Centures of Love, Romantic Friendship and Desire**, edited by Emma Donoghue, 209 pages to remind us that indeed, too, the pen has been in our hands, though the individual voices may have been lost to history.



Emma Donoghue's intent for this collection was to capture "a certain quality of passion." So the assembled poems speak of friendship and romantic love, and call into question the nature of sexuality and intimacy between women. The book opens with a poem by Katherine Phillips, the mother of all female friendship poems. From "To Mrs. M.A., Upon Absence," written 1650, published 1664:

What angry star then governs me
That I must feel a double smart?
Pris'ner to fate as well as thee;
Kept from thy face, link'd to thy heart?

There is the wondrous Aphra Behn (1640-89), whose poem, "To the Fair Clarinda, Who Made Love to Me, Imagin'd More than Woman," reminds us that an entire poem can be located in a title.

There is this important poem by Elizabeth Moody, who published **Poetical Trifles** in London in 1798:

"To a Lady, Who was a great Talker"

If your friendship to take I must
take too your clack,
That friendship, methinks, I could
almost give back;
Yet for worlds would I not with
your amity part,
Could you lock up your tongue
when you open your heart.

Poems Between Women is a gem because it assembles in one volume work that might have only been available to literary scholars. We know Emily Dickinson, and now, too, we can read the poems of Helen Hunt Jackson, her lifelong friend, who follows her in this anthology. Both Jackson and Dickinson were mentored by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a famous editor and man-of-letters, though Jackson, who achieved fame in her lifetime, was encouraged to write, and Dickinson discouraged from publication.

"Love poetry," Emma Donoghue tells us in the introduction, "at its best has always tended towards the universal, rushing past the who and what to get to the transcendental why," and this may account partially for Dickinson's "immortality." From Dickinson's untitled poem (all were untitled) which surely must be the most erotic poem written in the 19th century:

Wild Nights—Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!

Included are poems by Mary Coleridge (1861-1907), the great-great-niece of the poety Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who published a series of novels in her lifetime, but was shy to show the world her poetry. In Coleridge's biography, Donoghue informs us that Coleridge lived all her life with her parents and sisters, except for trips abroad with a group of close women friends known as the Quintette. It should be noted that the Biographical Notes assembled in **Poems Between Women**, are intellegent, scholarly, and critical, and enhance one's understanding of the poem and the social/cultural context in which they were written. The notes are sometimes more interesting than the poems. From Coleridge's "The Witch":

I have walked a great while over
the snow,
And I am not tall nor strong.
My clothes are wet, and my teeth
are set,
And the way was hard and long.

I have wandered over the fruitful
earth,
But I never came here before.
Oh, lift me over the threshold,
and let me in at the door!

At the end of this volume, the pen is unmistakenly in the hands of the lesbian literati of our time. We think back through our American sisters, Marilyn Hacker and Cheryl Clarke. There is no Elizabeth Bishop (whose references to her sexuality were almost always veiled), no Anne Sexton, and no Linda Gregg writing of Aphrodite. The editor's choices seem to indicate that late in the 20th century passion and romantic friendship in women's poetry are decidedly sexual.

From "Willyce" by Pat Parker:

When i make love to you
i try
with each stroke of my tongue
to say i love you
to tease i love you
to hammer i love you
to melt i love you

But there is much here to admire and discover. **Poems Between Women** is a lovely volume, and if you have a friend, consider giving her this book...

Debra Weinstein is the author of ***Rodent Angel*** *(NYU Press, 1996). She teaches Risk and Poetry, A Beginning Poetry Workshop at the New School for Social Research in New York City.*

Ravenous Passion

by Thomas Long

The Collected Poems
by Reynolds Price
Scribner
ISBN 0684832038
hardback $37.50, 472 pp.

For weeks I have lingered over Reynolds Price's poems as one does over a new lover—in the bath, garden, bed—encountering pleasures new and familiar, enjoying astonishment, ignoring (but always remembering) and dreading disappointments.

Price is better known to readers as a novelist, and his voice—a patrician Carolina accent as liquid as molasses and as smoky as whisky—familiar to listeners of National Public Radio, where he offers essays. That voice emanates from the poems in this collection.

It is a remarkably large collection, representing three books of poems published only since 1982, and this year's collection, **The Unaccountable Worth of the World**, and Price's journal sequences, "Days and Nights," which he describes as a notebook of short poems begun on February 13, 1984 "that sketched actual events of my days and nights."

That year in June, coincidentally or prophetically, Price learned that he had developed a pernicious cancer around his spine—frequently troped in his poems as "the eel"—which would soon render him paraplegic:

It is one foot long, thick as a pencil
And lives in the upper half of my spine—
Ambitious now to grow all ways.
Every atom of me turns to it
Is me consumed.
Yet it's always been here always,
Original part—which is my first news
For you in years. It came in the first
Two cells of me, a gift therefore
From you or Father—my secret twin . . .
("The Eel")

The genetic inheritance is like nothing so much as Original Sin, the Christian metaphor for the inexorably fatal legacy that we all bear. Not only is Price's poetic figure Protestant, but his language as well, the iambic lines of Milton and the King James Version.

Not surprisingly, Price frequently takes up biblical themes:

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In these intensely lyrical poems, Cassells follows his "beautiful signor" much as Dante followed Beatrice, accepting wild-hearted risks along the soul's journey. "Cassells is a passionate poet whose poems touch the core of human connection through which can flow union with the infinite. Highly recommended." – *Library Journal* *Paper* $14

TIMOTHY LIU
Say Goodnight

"Timothy Liu's poems are vicious, beautiful, over the top and deceptively well-mannered. I like the way they surprise me with their utter lack of innocence. Or clutter. Like life, they simply stop. Both *seething* and commanding: Say Goodnight." – *Eileen Myles* *Paper* $14

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You young in the bronze day, gore
to the wrists,
Coarse hair kinked in the cold
sweat of triumph,
Thrusting the startled head at
Father
(Pumpkin-huge with turquoise
earbobs,
Chinking bells), you rank with
the first wild
Stench of manhood roasting your
fork—
It happened I loved you, watched
my heart
Fling thin cords past the grinning
giant
And bind you in; watched yours
bind me:
Safe in the first and strongest
bond.
("Jonathan's Lament for David")

Here as elsewhere in the poems, Price explicitly celebrates the ravenous passion of men for each other:

. . . you are calligraphed
Invisibly in an endless trail
That is both my name and the
framing outline
Of ten thousand pictures, perfect
memories
(In universal code of human
mime)
Of those two-thousand-two-
hundred-fifty minutes
When—merged in mutual
angelic maintenance,
Consuming each other like
buttered carp—
We earned our vast short seamless
luck.
("The Claim")

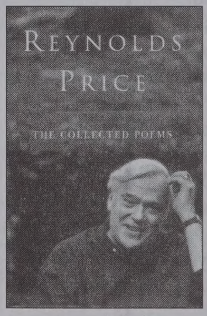
While these poems celebrate the ceaseless hunger for union—

. . . bearing down on me at
angelic angles
More intricate, more deeply cut
On the air's dry plane than any
meeting
In Euclid's dream of perfect
juncture—
Mitred joints so true no chink
Of sun could pry.
. . . till in one broad
Eventual glide, I was all you,
You me, we single.

(the carpentry conceit could come right out of Shakespeare or the Metaphysical Poets)—Price's voice is often autumnal:

Ten years gone, four more
meetings,
Earnest tries with wiser minds
And grand results in grander
rooms
But not again—never, none,
With no one else, not that cellular
Transmigration when willing you
And willing I mad of our selves
One sizable brief kind of holocaust
To be, in one dim rental room,
A speechless broad tall compound
creature:
Fragrant, fertile, unforeseen
And soon extinct—its only feature,
The white museum of these black
lines,
Whatever selves we bear from
here
Through later fates in tranquil
hands.
("Juncture")

Not surprisingly this poem represents sacred eros, since it is derived from a scene in Milton's **Paradise Lost**, in which the Raphael describes angelic commingling to Adam and Eve, and the "juncture" of the poem's title conflates sexual union with literal and figurative crossroads.



Perhaps Price's most poignant expressions of loss are the poems on those dying young, several of which are tributes to young men dying or dead of AIDS, the subject of Price's most recent novel, **The Promise of Rest**.

In many respects Price's is a voice of privilege—Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, professor at Duke University, acquaintance of Auden, Robert Lowell, Frost, Samuel Barber, Stephen Spender, among others—that might not appeal to all readers. Some of the poems, particularly some of the "Days and Nights" sequences, might have been left out. Nonetheless, **Collected Poems** is a remarkable achievement from a writer more often acknowledged as Southern and novelist, less often as queer.

Thomas L. Long teaches literature at Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton, Virginia.

Licking the Razor

by Christine Cassidy

Diesel Fuel: Passionate Poetry
by Pat Califia
A Richard Kasak Book
ISBN 156333-5352
paperback $12.95, 307 pp.

Diesel Fuel, Pat Califia's insightful and eminently readable first collection of poems, is an important contribution to the small body of work about S/M experience in the late 20th century.

Best known for her fiction and essays, Califia's voice is direct and at times wistful, yet she achieves the lyrical pitch and truth-telling that good poetry demands. Stylistically, Califia's poems are reminiscent of Sharon Olds'—matter-of-fact, focused on the domestic, and explicit. Some of them are downright sexy.

Arranged chronologically, the poems explore Califia's relationships to women, to men, to "Miscellaneous (But Not Inconsequential) FTMs," to tops, to bottoms; one section delves into the years "back when [her] leather was new." Califia avoids self-pity or coming off as holier-than-thou. Instead,

Symbolic Changes: An Interview with Carl Phillips

Poet Carl Phillips is the author of ***In the Blood****, which won the Morse Poetry Prize,* ***Cortege****, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and a Lambda Literary Award, and* ***From the Devotions****, his most recent book of poems from Graywolf Press. Phillips has received fellowships and prizes from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Massachusetts Artists Foundation, and the Academy of American Poets. He teaches at Washington University, St. Louis, where he also directs the creative writing program.*

Karen Helfrich: Any poetry plots in St. Louis for National Poetry Month (April) this year? If you could dream up any "public relations" scheme for National Poetry Month, what would it be?

Carl Phillips: Plots—that sounds so sinister, doesn't it? No plots, but there is at least one plan I'm aware of, because I'm masterminding it. I'm one of two Witter Bynner Fellows chosen this year by the Library of Congress, and one of the duties that comes with is to organize a public reading that is in keeping with Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky's Favorite Poem Project. The idea behind the project is to remember the place poetry once had in this country, in that time when people who weren't poets knew certain poems by heart, when poetry was part of the generally received culture, as it were. Three launch sites for the project have been chosen—Los Angeles, New York City, and St. Louis. We'll have a public reading of favorite poems, to be read by people who are neither poets nor teachers of poets/poetry. With luck, the mayor will be one of the readers; we'll also have some schoolchildren—a variety of people from across Missouri. It should be exciting. Fantasy plots? I don't know—the project I just described is very much a fantasy that's been made realizable. But if I must come up with something else...Well, I'm intrigued by the latest trend in having messages that come adhesively attached to produce—have you seen this? It wouldn't be the worst thing if every orange came with a poem attached to it, I suppose—or a poem on the back of cereal boxes, since everyone seems to read those.

photo by Doug Macomber

KH: As a fairly recent transplant to the midwest, find that the change of scenery has affected your writing or your sensibility in any really noticeable ways?

CP: I think my work has become increasingly more interior, which might not make sense, given the expansiveness of the midwest landscape. But for me, the ocean remains the expansive thing—I know that when I write in Provincetown each summer, the actual structure of the lines and of the line-of thought becomes more unwieldy, or wide-ranging, and I'm convinced that it has to do with my writing with the ocean always in view. The midwest landscape, in comparison, seems starker to me, at least in the winter, and my reaction initially was to turn inward more, away from it, which has led to a richer interior life, intellectually—the poems are less a recording, now, of what's observed in the world than of what's observed in the soul, if that makes sense. But having said that, landscape is very important to me... And the poems change, yes, but it's difficult to pinpoint how. It's more than going to a mountain and then writing about a mountain—there's an entire psychological difference, but how to describe the psychology of mountains vs. that of a desert, for example?

KH: How would you describe the current state of poetry in this country? Do you see any striking obsessions, qualities, attentions?

CP: Well, there are certain topical concerns, of course. The AIDS epidemic, for example, has been the context within which so many writers have found themselves wrestling with those old issues of mortality, morality, the possibility of the soul, the guesses about a life past this one. But these metaphysical concerns have always been with us; as I say, it's the context that has changed in the last twenty years. There's also been an opening-up of poetry, thanks to the influence of slams, open mike nights at bookstores, etc., the result of which has been a bit of a return to the oral tradition which was where poetry began in the first place. Poetry is a fairly organic thing, it's supposed to keep growing and changing, so it's great to see the changes going on—confirmation that the art is still very much alive.

KH: At a reading in New York this past January, you read a poem "Interior: The Kill," which you introduced as the poem in which you "kill off" your symbols—arrow, stag, leaves—that grace your first three books of poems. What do you do after you kill off your symbols? Do you see something really different happening in your new poems? Do you wait for new symbols to emerge?

CP: I don't think we ever choose our symbols—over time, we look at the poems and we realize how frequently certain things keep reappearing. In a moment of impatience with that this winter, I decided to kill off the symbols you mention. What happens next? See what symbols find their way into the new poems, I guess. I think every poet acquires a private symbology, eventually—I just don't like doing over again what I've already done—how else can we grow as writers? So yes, I'll have to wait for the new symbols—and ideally, growth will happen during the waiting.

KH: Who are your three all-time favorite poets (or poems) and why? What is it about particular poems that continues to send you back to them?

CP: This evening: Hopkins, Dickinson, H.D., because their poems, on every reading, make me see what I've always seen over again, in a way that makes them as if seen for the first time. And that's what sends me back to any good poem.

Karen Helfrich has an MFA in Poetry from Washington University. Her poems have appeared in AGNI and Sou'wester. *She currently works as an editor in New York City.*

the reader is treated to humor, and poignancy, meted out with a light but exacting touch:

Since I didn't get laid this weekend,
I had time to wax my truck.
Loretta's ruby hood gleams like something new.
The truck has got a finish now as
Shiny and hard as
The one I wish I had
On my heart.
("Driving")

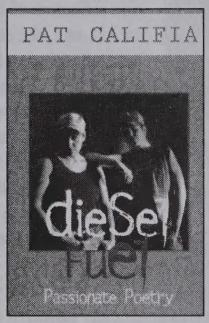
Califia is masterful in her use of recurring images; certain words—punch, blade, beat, to name but a few—resonate throughout the collection. One can practically feel her "punch" in the cunt—Califia's euphemism for fisting. "Shall I make you lick the razor?" she asks early on in "Thanatos." Later, in "It's Always Ladies' Choice," the speaker characterizes herself as having "a glass-edged knife for a tongue." And later still, in the same poem, in one of the loveliest images in the book, Califia addresses "A boy who would tell the truth/Even if his cock was hard":

If you want to take me out in your boat,
I'll bail you out, and not complain if we wind up
Holding a senior prom for two
In a meadow of stars,
Dancing belly to belly with wild cold grass
Flogging one back and the light of the moon
Beating down upon the other.

There are love poems that stand out for their simplicity and elegance, especially "The Great Game," with its subtle rhyme scheme and simple pronouncement of loyalty; "Gratis," in which a long-time friend cannot accept gifts; and the more traditional "A Gorean Poem" ("I will wear my skin/Like silk beneath your hands").

But Califia is no dewy-eyed romantic. Behind her seemingly effortless half-rhymes, she's keeping a tight rein on her iambs:

With scrub brushes and dusters,
We craft a sort of romance
More potent than the love that's made
By most, who woo armed only with a kiss.
("The Houseboy's First Day")



The book's weaknesses include the Goddess references in the last section, and Califia's bowing to the temptation to deify her top (as in "What Am I Doing Here") by using all lowercase letters, which comes off as a conceit. In her "Forward Foreword," which is recommended reading as a "Forward Afterword," Califia spells out her mission: "To combat sexual shame by speaking as much truth as I know about what really happens in the realm of Eros..." Perverts, rejoice. For here at last is a book of verse that celebrates not fantasy, which we can get any ol' time, but a good strong dose of leather reality.

Christine Cassidy is Marketing Director of Poets & Writers *magazine.*

An Intricate Choreography

by Peter Klappert

Stein, Bishop & Rich: lyrics of love, war, & place
by Margaret Dickie
University of North Carolina Press
ISBN 0807846228
paperback $16.95, 234 pp.

One may disagree with Margaret Dickie's claim that "these poets became the dominant voices of their respective generations," but Gertrude Stein (1874-1946), Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) and Adrienne Rich (b. 1929) certainly have "assumed a major role in the cultural work of their age" and "together, demonstrate the force of twentieth-century lesbian poetry."

Dickie is so good at succinct synopses and antitheses, it is tempting to let her write her own review:

> Because together their works span almost the entire century, these poets may reveal some of the different stages of lesbian poetry as it burgoned in the twentieth century. And sharing the same preoccupations, they may illuminate each other's work...That these poets are lesbians is central to this study, because I believe that their desire to write love poems fueled their poetic experimentation...I want to claim their public voice grew out of their most private subject, their love and erotic desire for women, expanding its range to subjects that may have a particular resonance for women but are not solely women's concerns, subjects such as war, place, class, and race, for example...I shall argue that their poems reveal different models of lesbian erotic relationships, but I make no claim for the possibilities of

their lived experiences...

As an experimental writer, Stein would appear to have little in common with either Bishop, who wrote often in highly traditional form, or with Rich, whose dream of a common language has many parts but none that so self-consciously excludes the common reader as Stein's. Stein shares with Bishop a need to code her erotic experience, and her experimental writing performed the same service that Bishop's extremely elaborate forms often accomplished. Rich, too, has acknowledged her need for coded expression as a protection not only from public censor but also from herself...

This idea of language working as protection...connects these poets and remains a central need even now in lesbian writing. It was not enough that each of them wanted to express herself and her experience; she also wanted or needed to hide that expression from too intrusive eyes. And the hiding and secrecy were part of the pleasure of the expression, part of the pains they took with their poetry...

As Dickie's "Introduction" suggests, **Stein, Bishop, & Rich** is a book for those already familiar with the three poets, readers who have copies of the most important work at hand, and above all for scholars. Although free of "critspeak"—that impenetrable jargon which has been the curse of both criticism and the English language for at least two decades—this study never quotes an entire poem or section of a poem and rarely discusses one at length in a single place, although it quotes from and refers to touchstone texts many times. Rather, Dickie moves nimbly among a huge volume of writing; quotes frequently but in small bites; makes generous reference to the poets' novels, stories, plays, essays, speeches, interviews and letters; and carries on a cordial but often argumentative conversation with other critics—of whom there are many.

The differences among the poets are as interesting as the similarities, and Dickie is very good at conveying both. Gertrude Stein was of the first generation of "self-consciously lesbian writers"; she began to write "in order to come to terms with the disappointment of her love for May Bookstaver and later to express her attachment to Alice B. Toklas." Her experimentation derived from her early investigations of language as a sort of periodical table of elements which could be combined quite differently (and more playfully)

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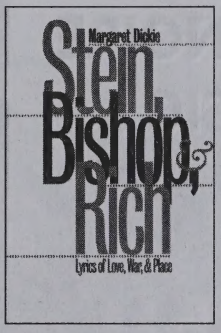
than they were in standard usage, under laws of linguistic chemistry and physics that conventional grammarians could not imagine. Her own language was elemental; the result was not. She craved and courted public recognition, but it only came to her with the publication of her much more accessible and realistic memoirs, **The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas** (1933), which she wrote *as if* it were the work of her beloved Alice. Only since the rise of feminism, gender theory, and the still more experimental, nondiscoursive work of some post-modern poets has Stein's poetry been recognized outside a small circle of readers.



Elizabeth Bishop's achievement, too, has only recently been widely appreciated. She received many honors in her lifetime but for much of her career was treated as minor "descriptive poet" (the particular strength, it was thought, of women writers). Her modest output of poems, essays, and stories, and her brilliant, voluminous letters, are now the raw material for an entire critical industry. She was an impeccable technician who was also naturally reticent: she spent twenty-six years on her wonderful poem "The Moose," whose three-beat lines occupy but five of the 279 pages of in **The Complete Poems, 1927-1979**. She came to write poems of such grace and naturalness that most readers were slow to perceive their intricate choreography, even slower to intuit nuances and secrets.

Adrienne Rich began publishing as a representative poet of the late New Criticism in the 1950s. In Dickie's words, "she began to free her poetry from its early formalism long before she identified her sexual politics, and she has moved on from the imaginative inspiration of coming out to embrace worlds of suffering and victimization that have political resonance for her quite apart from gender." Nonetheless, her coming out in **The Dream of a Common Language** (1978) was a major event which "encouraged a general, popular, and political interest in lesbian poetry that may have inspired the burgeoning interest in women's poetry in general" and, indeed, in the kind of criticism offered here. Dickie agrees with Willard Spiegelman that Rich's poetry has seldom received the "*literary* criticism she most deserves," and while she clearly admires Rich, she is critical of some of the poetry and is sometimes sharply at odds with other critics. Margaret Dickey is a perceptive, articulate reader who genuinely loves poetry; she has also written studies of Emily Dickinson, Wallace Stevens, Hart Crane, Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes. She co-edited (with Thomas Travisano) the collection of essays **Gendered Modernisms: American Women Poets and Their Readers**, which includes her essay "Recovering the Repression in Stein's Erotic Poetry" (a condensed version of some analyses in **Stein, Bishop, & Rich**).

Nonetheless, I was initially disappointed by her latest study and put it aside in some annoyance. On the one hand, the book's tight symmetrical structure (three chapters—on "love," "war" and "place"—on each poet, bracketed by an introduction and a conclusion), together with the author's relentless repetition of her thesis (that these poets simultaneously write about and conceal their lesbian affections), made **Stein, Bishop, & Rich** read like transcribed lecture notes for a graduate literature course. On the other, her unwillingness to quote and discuss entire poems or sections, along with her generous quotes from and citations to other critics, implied she was addressing a small, intense circle of specialists.

I was wrong, and I'm glad to admit it. On a second reading the repetitions seem less oppressive. (They largely drop away after her second chapter on Bishop.) More importantly, Dickie's agility among the many texts, her gift for comparison and antithesis, her balance and independence from political agendas, and above all her obvious love of the poetry, make this a valuable book. Nonetheless, readers should start with the introduction *and* conclusion and then read the entire study *from* "Introduction" *through* "Conclusion." And they should allow lots of time for rereading the three poets along the way.

Peter Klappert is the author of five collections of poems; his ***The Idiot Princess of the Last Dynasty*** *will be reprinted in Carnegie-Mellon's Contemporary Classics series later this year. He teaches in the MFA Program at George Mason University.*

Infusing the Vision

by Jennifer Coleman

Night Life
Paul Schmidt
Painted Leaf Press
ISBN 0965155803
paperback $10.00, 81 pp.

Pick up Paul Schmidt's **Night Life** and read the first poem, "The Operation." This is the cream: bizarre vitality despite threat as the poem rises to catastrophe more complex than being "circumcised at six by mother and grandmother on the dining room table..." Before you make up your mind about the book, flip to "Trucker from Killeen" on page 42 and "Night

Life" on 55. This survey gives readers a hint of what they're in for: a cinematographic, persona-hopping ride through Schmidt's vision.

Schmidt gleefully inhabits a cowboy, trucker, sailor, and even a poet's persona, making stereotypes live in order to infuse a gay vision and sexual awareness. "Austin City Limits" poems are explicitly heterosexual, but implicitly tell another story: "they break a branch from a bush they've long forgotten/the name of. They suck off their longnecks..." Schmidt's translations of "Nine Poems By Catullus" cut through centuries to revive a defiant, bawdy celebration of sex: "You think when I write about kissing my boyfriend/that makes me less of a man?/Fuck you all and suck my dick."

Other poems create scenes full of gesture and image, revealing Schmidt's background as a playwright. In "Poeme Noir" the poet acknowledges this vision: "The gesture's what counts/even with out accouterments/ guns, cigarettes, desperation." These poems are striking for *how* they see, rather than *what* they see, and are most successful in poems like "Night Life" where the scene speaks for itself with little intrusion of commentary by the speaker.

Maybe the most successful poem is the one most different: "The Operation." No personas, no cinematic gestures, but a complex poem about family, catastrophe, and life where every character is in conflict, living the words of their vision: "I would have gone, but I'm perverse./ You cannot cut me off so easily."

Jennifer Coleman lives in Virginia.

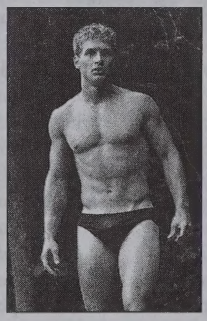
Runts for Hunks

by José Villarrubia

Whitman's Men
by David Groff and Richard Bergman
Rizzoli
ISBN 0789300222
hardback $18.95, 80 pp.

Salute, Walt Whitman
by Duane Michals
Twin Palms Publishers
ISBN 0944092349
hardback $50.00, 112 pp.

To illustrate poetry well is hard. To do it in photography is almost impossible. Photography's tendency towards the literal makes it a problematic companion to poetry's freedom. This fact hasn't stopped two major publishers from releasing two books of photographically illustrated poems that are very similar in concept. Rizzoli's **Whitman's Men** and Twin Palms' **Salute, Walt Whitman** both collect and illustrate poems by the granddaddy of gay lit. The closest to a photographic representation of Whitman's world has been, as Allen Elllenzwaig pointed out in **The Homoerotic Photograph**, Thomas Eakins' images of skinny adolescents bathing. The boys were slim because these photographs were taken over a hundred years ago. An updated version of these idyllic vistas, following the current no-pecs-no-sex gay taste would substitute these runts with hunks. Only then would these images be marketable to a community apparently starved for gift books of erotic photographs of muscular men.



from Salute

You would think that a book with a cheesy title like **Whitman's Men** (*Advocate Men* comes to mind), would be all about beefcake, but it is not. Accompanying Whitman's most homoerotic body of work, the Calamus poems, is a collection of pictures by seven young photographers. John Dugdale blue-toned images recreate a nostalgic vision of a bygone era fully compatible with Whitman's world. The one exception is his photo printed on the cover, a titillating shot of two gym bunnies to go with the titillating title. Robert Flynt's disturbing juxtapositions of floating figures with vintage photographs have echoes of patriotism, camaraderie and love between men, all themes characteristic of Whitman. Frank Yamrus bodies in nature are reminiscent of

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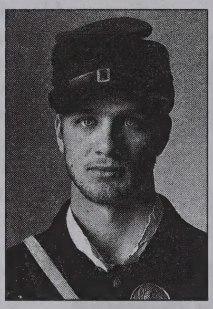
Whitman's frequent subject matter. Steve Morrison and Bill Jacobson are talented artists, but their work is an ill fit for this book, so contemporary that it appears anachronistic in this context. Russell Maynor has only one image reproduced, nicely retro, but not enough to get an idea of his style. And Mark Beard's hand-colored photographs are not as strong as the other images in the book . All of this makes the selection of photographs in **Whitman's Men** hit-and-miss. A smaller group of photographers would have yielded a more consistent statement. **Whitman's Men** is well designed and is printed in an attractive small format that makes it a nice gift for a Whitman bibliophile or anybody interested in homoerotic photography in general.



from Salute

If **Whitman's Men** main problem is that many of the photographs are not appropriate for the text, Duane Michals' photographs for **Salute, Walt Whitman** are *too* appropriate. In a poem, serving as an introduction, Michals writes:

> *I sing the songs Walt Whitman sang,*
> *They ring around my mind:*
> *I recognize his cosmic slang,*
> *I am Walt Whitman's kind*

And then he goes on to try to prove this declaration with a group of 64 black and white photographs. They are mostly of an unnamed student athlete who Michals discovered that supposedly embodies Whitman's ideal of masculinity (also *International Male's* for that matter). He is posed in several states of undress (but curiously never nude) in typically Whitmanesque environments: forests, streams, fields etc... These are mildly erotic images of the student mostly bare-chested or wearing a black Speedo. Sometimes he was posed with a giant book containing poems and words written not by Whitman, but by Michals. They are written in marker in very large higher case letters, so they can be read even it is photographed from the distance. This peculiar choice makes this prop look like a clumsily executed book for people with bad sight. It is used in sequences where the photographs zoom in or out from the model. This technique, which Michals' has used delightfully in the past, as in his surreal sequence "Things are queer" (1973), here becomes just a gimmick.

The absolute worst choices in **Salute, Walt Whitman** are the section about Whitman taking care of wounded soldiers, in which Michals poses the student in bandages and crutches in some photographs and in a civil war uniform in others. And to illustrate the poem about Lincoln's death "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," Michals posed the student contemplating a copy of the *New York Times* with the headline of... Kennedy's assassination! Next to him is, what else, a vase filled with lilacs. These images are so literal that they become unintentionally kistch, making the most serious sections of the book appear humorous.

In three of the photographs the student is accompanied by a farmer playing Walt Whitman. For some reason the book also contains two photographs of the real Whitman. One is a typical portrait of Whitman, looking amusedly at the camera. The other is a studio portrait of Whitman with his lover Peter Doyle. Printed right after this double portrait, there is a photograph by Michals of the student and the farmer sitting in a diner. When we compare both couples we see that not only was Whitman waxy looking and not quite as robust as his look-alike the farmer, but his boyfriend looked like the opposite of the student in the photographs. Peter Doyle, judging from this print, was not classically attractive and definitely more elfin than handsome. It seems, after all, that Whitman's ideal was nothing like Michals'. The visualization of Whitman's world created by Michals is boycotted by the documented reality of his existence.

Salute, Walt Whitman is a great disappointment. Michals has produced several gorgeous books for Twin Palms in the past, most notably **eros and thanatos** and still knows how to create lovely images. **Salute, Walt Whitman** is impeccably designed, but one would expect more than beautifully packaged pretty pictures from one of the truly great photographers working today.

from Whitman's Men

Nine years ago Michals published a small book about another gay poet: **Homage to Cavafy**. In it he alternated his own vignettes, with his own stories as well as texts, with Cavafy's poems. Michals' photographs didn't illustrate the poems. Instead they complemented them and gave the a new dimension. It's a pity that he didn't take the same approach this time.

José Villarrubia lives and works in Baltimore, Maryland where he teaches at Towson University and the Maryland Institute College of Art.

photo by

On Publishing

National Poetry Month

by Lesléa Newman

Some questions have no answers: What is the meaning of life? Can love last forever? How does one get a book of poetry published? I wish I had the answer to that last question, as it is one I am frequently asked (at writer's conferences, on the street, and once on the subway). A writer once said, "Writing has three rules. Unfortunately no one knows what they are." The same can be said of publishing. I don't know the rules; all I know is what has worked for me, which I am happy to share with the following warning: don't take anything you are about to read as a hard and fast rule. Except this: the best way to get a book of poetry published is to write an absolutely terrific collection.

The first step to take on your road to being a published poet is to give yourself an attitude adjustment. Don't submit your poetry to editors, offer it. According to my dictionary, the definition of submit is to yield in surrender and the definition of offer is to present for sale. The power dynamics of the publishing world are often perceived as the editor being all-powerful and the writer having no power at all. Yes, the editor has something you want, the ability to get your name into print, but you have something the editor wants: a fabulous piece of writing.

Before you even think about publishing a book of poetry, get your poems out to journals, anthologies and magazines. Read professional publications like *Poets & Writers* and *AWP Chronicle*, both of which have a large "Calls for Materials" section. Publishing is really a match game: it is your job to hunt down magazines and journals that publish work comparable to your own. For example, it would surely be a waste of your time and postage to send a lesbian love poem to *Field and Stream*.

Poetry is usually sent out in batches of three to five poems. Include a short cover letter, stating your past publishing credentials, if you have any. If you don't have any, remember this: every single published writer, at one time in his or her life, was an unpublished writer. We all start somewhere.

Should one send the same poems to more than one editor? My advice is no. Editors work hard, they are underpaid (if they're paid at all) and it's very frustrating to accept a poem only to be told by the poet that it's been sold elsewhere. Yes, editors take forever (remember, many of them have a 9 to 5 job just like you do), but the best way to deal with the situation is to write a lot of wonderful poems, so you have a wide selection to send out.

So, let's say you're at the point where you have a book-length manuscript of poetry completed. What do you do? If you've been publishing individual poems from your collection all along, by the time your masterpiece lands on an editor's desk, that editor should already be familiar with your name. You should also be developing your audience in any way you can: participate in open readings and poetry slams; shmooze and cruise at OutWrite and other writing conferences; write book reviews and Op-Ed pieces. In other words, don't be shy.

Of course luck has a lot to do with it. My first poetry collection, a chapbook called **Just Looking for My Shoes**, was published because I was studying at Naropa Institute, where I had the good fortune to be working as Allen Ginsberg's apprentice. My job was to help him answer his voluminous mail. Often, when an editor asked Allen for a poem, Allen would tell me to send one of mine along as well. Eventually, the owner of a small press asked me if I had enough material for a chapbook. I didn't, but I remedied that situation in a heartbeat. Yes, I was lucky, but I also knew enough to show up (was it Woody Allen or my Aunt Judy who said 90% of life is just showing up?). Anyway, the point is, even at the tender age of 25, I took myself seriously enough as a poet to get myself out to Boulder, Colorado, to study with the master.

By the time my second book of poems, **Love Me Like You Mean It**, was ready to be sent out, I had published my first novel, **Good Enough to Eat**. Which meant that my name was known by some feminist editors, many of whom liked the book, but none of whom wanted to publish it. When Irene Reti, publisher of HerBooks, wrote me a letter full of praise for my work along with regrets for the fact that she didn't have the money to print it, I made her an offer she couldn't refuse: we would split the publishing costs and the profits (if any) 50/50. Unconventional? Sure. But it worked, and **Love Me Like You Mean It** not only earned back the money we both put in, but turned a modest profit as well. My next collection of poetry, **Sweet Dark Places**, was published by HerBooks in a smiliar arrangement.

This year, I did the impossible: I sold two poetry collections. The first, **Still Life with Buddy**, was offered to, and declined by over 50 houses. (To be a poet, you must be persistent). Rather than despair, I showed up again, this time at BookExpo America, and walked up and down the aisles, pleading with publishers to take a look at my work. I came across a printing company, and had a long chat with the owner, since I never ruled out the possibility of self-publishing (having successfully gone that route with **Heather Has Two Mommies**). Upon hearing what my book was about, the owner suggested I try Pride Publications. Having nothing to lose, I sent the book off, and shortly after it was accepted, an excerpt from the book earned me a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

My latest poetry collection, **The Little Butch Book**, was sold to New Victoria, a press I had worked with before, and who swore up and down and sideways that they would never publish a poetry book. In the words of my grandmother, "Just because they said no to me, you think I'm finished?" It was my job to convince my publisher that this book had an audience eagerly awaiting it. Of course it helps that the book can be cross-referenced as humor as well as poetry.

In the words of the Dalai Lama (a wonderful poet in his own right): never give up. Believe in your work. Be tenacious. All you need to find is one editor who loves your work as much as you do. It is not unlike falling in love (and by the way, can love last forever?).

Reviews

Lesbian Fiction

Mister Sandman
by Barbara Gowdy
Steerforth Press
ISBN 0156005778
paperback $12.00, 268pp.

On a recent trip to Toronto, a friend of mine told me about a favorite game of his called "Canadian or Dead?" in which players take turns naming famous people and guessing into which of these two categories they fall. It goes something like this: "Einstein?" "Dead!"; "k.d. lang?" "Canadian!"; "Marilyn Monroe?" "Dead!"; "Michael J. Fox?" "Canadian!"; "Buddy Holly?" "Dead!"; "Alex Trebec?" "Canadian!"; "Euripides?" "Dead!"; "Margot Kidder?" You get the point: After you've listed the above, along with Margaret Atwood, the Cowboy Junkies, Marshall MacLuhan, and a few hockey players, you've pretty much run out of celebrated living Canadians, suggesting that "America's hat," as this same friend insists on calling the proud nation to our north, has little to offer the world beside a strong health care system, low crime, and an inferiority complex. Of course, not every country can engage in relentless cultural imperialism on the scale of the United States. But recent developments in gay literature may make that mean-spirited little game harder to play, as a literary trickle-down effect brings compelling books like Persimmon Blackbridge's **Prozac Highway**, Sheila Norgate's **Storm Clouds Over Party Shoes**, and Barbara Gowdy's **Mister Sandman** across our borders. Gowdy, in particular, is sure to win the hearts and minds of her southern neighbors with her fascinating, quirky third novel.

Set in Gowdy's own Toronto, **Mister Sandman** explores the tragi-comic existence of the Canary family, whose members experience the full spectrum of sexuality, from dutiful heterosexual breeding and illicit gay and lesbian passion to confused date rape and pubescent nymphomania. It's probably a good thing there's no family pet. The father, Gordon, engages in a series of guilt-ridden homosexual dalliances, the last of which is conducted during private Bible study with the family minister. Housewife and mother Doris, whose life is accompanied by a never-ending free-associative soundtrack of Top-40 songs, romps gleefully through affairs with her aunt's geriatric nurse and the Avon lady, among others. Their younger daughter Marcy finds herself sleeping with a never-ending array of boys, all of whom are accompanied by freaky sidekicks, such as a head-lolling retarded brother, an obsessive-compulsive mother, and a dog whose eyes literally pop out—and have to be gingerly tucked back in again—when confronted with strangers. The older daughter Sonja is a dull-witted behemoth who gauges sexual excitement by comparing it to the erotic pleasure she derives from her work-at-home job affixing bobby pins to paper cards.

At the center of it all is Sonja's brain-damaged, illegitimate daughter Joan, a ghostly child who never grows beyond toddler height (and so wears doll clothes), cannot tolerate light (and so wears sunglasses twenty-four hours a day and dwells in a closet), and does not communicate verbally (and so imitates all other sounds, from the hum of the refrigerator to the roar of a motorcycle engine three blocks away).

With original, enthralling characters like these, Gowdy could have dispensed with plot altogether and no one would have been the wiser. To her credit, however, she constructs a tight narrative that keeps us turning the pages in bewildered fascination right to the end. That the novel's climax—the culmination of Joan's unsettling determination to break not only her own silence but that which pervades the Canary household—is not quite as explosive as one would wish, ultimately matters very little; as with sex, getting there is much more than half the fun.

Not only Gowdy's choice of subject—a family endearing in its combination of eccentricity, fallibility, and almost tragic innocence—but also her exquisite pacing and her misleadingly measured tone tempt one to place **Mister Sandman** on the bookshelf next to **The World According to Garp** and **The Hotel New Hampshire**. Like John Irving, Gowdy has produced a compulsively readable novel that, while technically accomplished, nevertheless encourages us to reevaluate the traditional relationships that link—or divide—sexuality, kinship, and honesty. Like Irving's Berry family in **The Hotel New Hampshire**, the Canaries live by slogans; having misheard Gordon say "The truth is only a version" on more than one occasion, his wife and daughters turn his deconstructive motto into a telling mantra: "The truth is only aversion." It is Gowdy's wisdom, combined with her delightful ability to tell a good story, that makes this novel such a valuable contribution to contemporary fiction.

—Jeannine DeLombard

GAY MEN'S FICTION

The Mammoth Book of Gay Short Stories
edited by Peter Burton
Carroll & Graf
ISBN 0786704306
paperback $10.95, 486 pp.

The Mammoth Book of Gay Short Stories has quite the tempting jacket photo. But we all know the old cliche, don't we? Trust me on this one: that lavender-tinted coverboy is mere studpup subterfuge for a madly trumpeting white elephant (or mammoth, as the case may be).

While there are fair amounts of decent writing and interesting themes to be found in the book's 47 stories, the only way to find them is to turn yourself into the Forrest Gump of gay lit, randomly poking around amidst editor Peter Burton's incoherent sampler of fictional bonbons until you find something that suits your fancy.

Working my way through this book, with its herky-jerky pacing, abrupt changes of pace and lack of a guiding vision, made me long for one of those nights when I curl up by the hearth with a glass of sherry and a good old-fashioned gay novel, glancing up to watch the flames dance as I toss another artistically pointless but commercially trendy queer anthology onto the fire.

In his introduction, Peter Burton explains that **Mammoth** features stories written in the 50 years since WWII, the end of which, Burton asserts (with scant explanation other than a quote from Quentin Crisp), was a turning point in gay culture. Fair enough, but then things get strange. Burton explains that when four friends from whom he'd solicited stories died he decided only to include authors who were still alive at press time. Burton writes that the loss of his peers "made it impossible to avail myself of stories by...James Baldwin...Truman Capote, John Cheever...W. Somerset Maugham, David Rees..."

Through his odd tribute to his writer friends, Burton does inestimable damage to the book he'd planned to feature them in. Given its forced omissions, **Mammoth** cannot in any way purport to represent the "best" stories of its time frame and, in fact, old age, even more than AIDS, makes "post-WWII stories by still-living authors" a tough thematic proposition. As the collection breaks down (and believe me, it breaks down), there is one story each from the '40s, '50s, and '60s, two from the '70s, twelve from the '80s and thirty from the '90s.

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April 24:
A Different Light/New York
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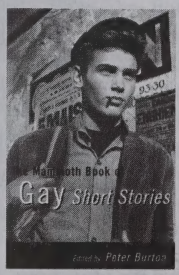
Reviews

Some are terrific (David Patrick Beavers' pitch-dark "Jonah," Colin Spencer's elegant "Nymph and Shepherd"); some howlingly awful ("'Paul, is that you?' I'd whispered through a mouthful of pre-cum" writes Peter Baker in "The Voyeur"); some by famous authors (Neil Bartlett, Andrew Holleran). "For various reasons" Burton presents them all in alphabetical order of author's name. He suggests that this less-than-arduous approach will provide "a literary kaleidoscope" leading to our serendipitous discoveries of fascinating themes and juxtapositions as we move from story to story. I suggest that the organization of dramatic and thematic flow is a primary task for any anthology editor who wishes to be taken seriously.

The John Preston/Michael Lowenthal non-fiction anthologies have worked because they assembled pieces that shared specific themes. The **Men On Men** anthologies have worked because they are published as a series, each volume striving to capture the facets of a relatively concise moment in time. Brian Bouldrey's still toddling but appealingly precocious two-year-old **Best Gay Fiction** annual features some contentious choices, but in its series title—and well argued introductory essays—lays out a clear-cut reason for being. Somewhat less satisfying, because they set too broad a goal for themselves, are single-volume, historically-minded collections such as Edmund White's **Faber Book of Gay Fiction** and David Leavitt and Mark Mitchell's **Penguin Book of Gay Short Fiction**, but they still are made valuable by their assemblers' realization that thoughtful organization, combined with clearly articulated editorial taste and mission and set forth in a strong prefatory essay, can make or break an anthology.

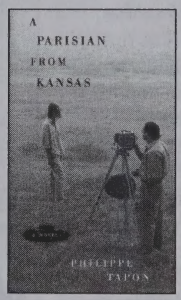


There are a frightful number of broken anthologies out there. "It's a bunch of good stuff" just doesn't cut it as *raison d'être*. And while emerging writers are justifiably proud to be published even in the latest, loosely conceived "Pen and Penis" or "Queernucopia" collection, even they should recognize the difference between loose chunks of stew meat cellophaned onto a styrofoam tray and an expertly skewered shishkebab.

Mammoth goulash, anyone?

—Jim Gladstone

A Parisian From Kansas
by Philippe Tapon
Dutton
ISBN 0525942394
hardback $23.95, 327 pp.



A Parisian from Kansas actually involves two novels and two main characters: it is both a novel based on Darren's life, and it is the story of Phillipe's experience of becoming a writer.

Through a series of conversations that take place in Paris cafés, Darren and Phillipe enter a partnership. In this collaborative effort Philippe acts as writer and Darren as director.

Philippe believes that as a writer he must suffer; only then will his writing be worth reading. It is from this perspective that Philippe conditions himself to suffer the pains of keeping company with someone who can be, in the truest sense of the word, insufferable.

Darren feels he has been elevated to sainthood because of his AIDS diagnosis. Like other saints, his background includes years of moral dissipation and heedless debauchery; instead of Augustine's Alexandria, the backdrop here is New York's contemporary club scene. In this tired world of fast techno beats, designer drugs, and glittery surfaces, accountability for one's choices is sacrificed to the exigencies of being fabulous: fabulous on the dance floor, fabulous in or out of clothes, and fabulous in bed. You can write the rest of the story yourself.

In the middle of the novel a transition occurs in the voice of the narrator. In a transcription of a voice recording Darren made, he describes what it was like to grow up in rural Kansas, the son of an overbearing mother and a noncommittal father. It becomes clear that Darren was emotionally larger than his family and craved more attention than what their industrious simplicity could provide. Leaving his hometown of Immaculatum, Darren arrives at Kansas State. There he passes for straight until someone in his fraternity outs him. At this point, he decides to be the homecoming queen he always was and heads for New York.

It is here that the Kansan escapee realizes that although he is out of the closet he's still in the dark about what's involved in ascending to the top of the club scene. Unfortunately Darren gradually loses what was authentically his and becomes someone who can be bought by the highest bidder.

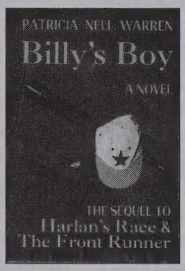
Tapon succeeds as a writer when he tells the story as it happened, when he reveals the feelings that cannot be packed into clever one-liners washed down with vodka martinis. Having seen the rise and fall of various "dancing queens," I wanted the truth in Darren's story, not the grand total of drinks spilled, cars crashed, marriages feigned. When Tapon is not caught up in the tedious game of "novel within a novel," he is capable of effective writing that articulates the experience of

the writer who must sever the attachment to pain as a vehicle to bring him literary acceptance.

—M.J. McNamara

Billy's Boy
by Patricia Nell Warren
Wildcat Press
ISBN 0964100948
hardback $24.95, 307 pp.

"I was nurtured on classic dynasty literature like **The Forsythe Saga**," writes Patricia Nell Warren in the foreword to her new novel, **Billy's Boy**. "Today I wanted to be the one to write the first saga focusing on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered family."



Some might argue that Armistead Maupin and Ethan Mordden have beaten her to the finish line, but **Billy's Boy** is a fine continuation of the story that began in 1974 with the publication of Warren's bestselling **The Front Runner**. Where **The Front Runner** and its sequel, **Harlan's Race**, were the stories of Olympic runner William Sive and his coach Harlan Brown in the 1970's and '80's, **Billy's Boy** is the tale of three years in the life of a lonely boy coming of age in Southern California in the early '90's.

"I was the science geek from hell," says Billy Heden, twelve years old and on the brink of puberty. "My only best friend was my mom."

Billy and his mother Betsy are moving from Sacramento to Costa Mesa, California, where she has accepted a job teaching physical education in a small college. It's a move that makes Betsy nervous; Orange County is largely white, conservative, and filled with the kind of people she and Billy call "Pinheads." Billy, an amateur astronomer, has a more practical reason for not wanting to be there: the smog in Orange County is so thick that it blocks the stars he loves to watch.

And Billy has an important reason for looking toward the stars. As the book begins, he has a dream so vivid that it transforms his life. Onboard a spaceship, Billy receives an urgent message from his deceased father, commanding Billy to seek him, leaving a complicated string of coordinates as a clue. For Billy, whose secret nickname for himself is "Finder," the search for his father becomes an odyssey.

Meanwhile, the Hedens have more earthly, immediate problems. Their new house is located directly next to Pinhead Central—the home of the Heasters, a conservative Christian family who aren't enamored of single moms who teach P.E. and evince little interest in men. When Billy becomes best friends with young Shawn Heaster, whom he calls Orik, the situation reaches flashpoint. After the parents discover the boys experimenting in the woods, Orik is shipped away for reparative therapy. When Orik eventually escapes and becomes a teen runaway, Billy now has two holy missions: finding his best friend as well as his father.

The Hedens move in with friends in Malibu, where Billy discovers an extended family he never knew he had—characters that will be familiar to readers of Warren's first two novels in the series. There's Harlan Brown and his lover Vince, now writing and producing documentaries, as well as Chino the bodyguard; Betsy's best friend Marian; and John Sive, William's wealthy father. Billy also makes some friends of his own, including Ana, the Malibu teen queen with pockets full of condoms; Teak, an effeminate, chubby club kid; and Elena, a tough baby dyke.

Warren's continuing work with gay and lesbian kids informs **Billy's Boy** throughout. At times the book is a bit weighty with statistics (particularly when those stats are shoehorned into the mouth of a teenager), but her concern for throwaway teens of all types comes through on every page of **Billy's Boy**; the glimpses we get of Orik's life on the street feel absolutely authentic. And authors of any age would envy the sixtysomething Warren's ability to capture the timber of a thirteen-year-old boy's voice.

Particularly admirable is Warren's refusal to capitulate with happy, or even definitive, endings. By the close of **Billy's Boy**, Billy has found both his father and his soulmate Orik—as we knew he would—but neither relationship turns out exactly how Billy or the reader expected. As Betsy puts it, "This orientation thing...the way it really works is still a profound mystery to me. It's kind of variable, like those stars you were always talking about."

Billy's Boy is an adult novel, both

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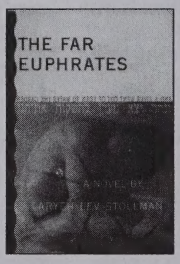
in tone and observation, yet one suspects that Warren's target audience here is questioning teenagers. Indeed, the writing and subject matter should make it right at home on any library shelf, while flying below the radar of those bookbanners obsessed by poor Heather and her Two Mommies. Like **The Catcher in the Rye**, **Billy's Boy** is a sophisticated pleasure, an adult novel that bright young people will be excited to discover on their own.

—Kevin Allman

The Far Euphrates
by Aryeh Lev Stollman
Riverhead
ISBN 1573220752
hardback $21.95, 206 pp.

Delivered with the simultaneously urgent and evanescent rhythms of chanted Hebrew, Aryeh Lev Stollman's **The Far Euphrates**, a tale of a Rabbi's son in the small city of Windsor, Ontario in the 1960s, elusively charts not so much a traditional literary coming of age, but its central character's deliberate efforts to "come of soul."



The book's emblematic penultimate section finds the narrator, Aryeh Alexander, withdrawing into his bedroom at age sixteen, where he draws the blinds and enters into a year of meditative solitude, based on the biblical notion of *tzimtzum*: "Self-contraction, retreat. God's withdrawal into himself to make a space in which he might place the physical universe."

As Aryeh's father explains to him over maps of the Holy Land, the ancient Euphrates river ran out of Eden, into the wider world. It is this agonized, far from Edenic world that Aryeh takes introspective stock of throughout the novel's unfurling of a freak auto accident, a series of miscarriages, the death of an uncle in a mental institution, a fatally ill little girl, the revelation of Holocaust torture, and the passing of several major characters.

Like so much of his life, Aryeh's homosexuality, which he has inklings of from early childhood, remains almost entirely an intellectual concept to him throughout the book. Waking from wet dreams of an older boy named Mickey, he comments, matter-of-factly, that "Shame seemed beside the point." But dreams are all that Aryeh has of a sexuality; he discusses his feelings with no one, he has no friends his own age, he exhibits neither passion nor frustration.

While it is generally a pleasure to find a novel in which a gay character's sexuality is not essential to his story, the downplaying of Aryeh's gayness here has a strange resonance that speaks to his character as a whole. Sexuality is one of many aspects of life that must be played out beyond the realms of intellect or rarified spiritualism; it calls for one's physical presence and for engagement beyond one's self. It is one of so many things—camaraderie, generosity and romance among the others—that teenage Aryeh denies himself in his keenly perceptive but sadly disengaged existence. He is clearly brilliant, but not fully human.

This would all be impossibly bleak were Stollman's style not so idosyncratically oblique. With the air of a mystic, young Aryeh—and, consequently the reader—takes on the book's events not as emotional hammerblows but as spurs to intellectual and spiritual contemplation of life's meaning. Some of his self-discoveries ring with insight: "...our souls were no more lasting or real than the watery matrix of our bodies. All that mattered to me was the clear statement, the unobstructed, even if tormenting, truth." However, Aryeh often seems unrealistically abstract, dispassionately isolated from the melodramatic emotional tumult one expects to find in a bright, sensitive adolescent. Then again, it is this very quality that lends Aryeh a certain Semitic resemblance to the Zen-chilled teenagers of J.D. Salinger's Glass Family stories. Like the now-revered but always difficult-to-pin-down "Raise High The Roofbeam, Carpenters," **The Far Euphrates** not only begs rereading, but becomes both more rewarding and more challenging with each pass.

—Jim Gladstone

If Only for One Nite
by James Earl Hardy
Alyson
ISBN 155583373
hardcover $17.95, 185 pp.

At the close of **2nd Time Around**, James Earl Hardy's thoroughly engaging follow-up to the acclaimed **B-Boy Blues**, Mitchell "Little Bit" Crawford lays his head upon the chest of his lover, Raheim "Pooquie" Rivers, to whom he has just given a set of house keys, and sighs a heart-felt "Welcome home." Readers eager to learn what domestic travails await one of the most appealing couples in contemporary queer fiction may be slightly disappointed by **If Only for One Nite**, the most recent "installment" of the **B-Boy** series, but only because Hardy moves away from the lovers' present in order to shed light on Mitchell's past.

5,248,888—that's ten years' worth of minutes, and it's a number weighing heavily on Mitchell's mind as his first high school reunion fast approaches. Hardy's use of the reunion as a structural device is wise; such an event inevitably forces us both to take stock of the present and reflect upon the past—which is exactly what Mitchell does. The reunion also allows Hardy

to play with a carousel of characters (a former classmate so dense that, had she "[taken] the Pepsi challenge, she would've chosen Dr. Pepper"), presenting them with a cinematic flair that delights as it delivers. The montage sequence eventually slows until our focus is directed on Warren Reid, Mitchell's former fantasy-made-flesh, a high school gymnastics coach with perfect form and all the right moves.

An affair quickly develops between the teenager and his teacher, and Hardy adeptly renders the heady mix of heart and "homohormones" that is first love, when every song on the radio seems significant and sex is better than both reading James Baldwin *and* "listening to Aretha...testifyin' on 'Dr. Feelgood'." We are swept up by Mitchell's enthusiasm, both sexual and emotional—Hardy's sex scenes are definitely *phat*—but we are aware, too, that no matter how hot Warren Reid may be, he is still a teacher engaged in an illicit affair with one of his students. By having the teenager refer to his lover only as "Mr. Reid," Hardy tellingly makes clear the true nature of the power dynamic in this lopsided relationship.

The only distraction in an otherwise engaging read is the speed with which Hardy allows Reid to turn from Dream Date to Demon Lover. Many of us, no doubt, have encountered a partner whose passion can do an about-face faster than an over-zealous drill sergeant, but the coach's diabolical transformation flattens him out, and as the novel reaches its perhaps too easily gained resolution, Reid ceases to exist as a credible character. That we should despise the coach for his various betrayals of the teenager under his care makes sense, but even the most reprehensible of fictional characters should be allowed *some* small measure of humanity.

Both newcomers and devoted readers of Hardy's work should be pleased by as fast-paced and engaging a novel as **If Only for One Nite**. Enjoyable as **Nite** may be, though, we can't help but hope that Hardy's next effort will return us to Little Bit and Pooquie in order to see what *new* doors those shiny, gold keys might open.

—Karl Woelz

GayCrostic Solved

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C. Howtown	N. City Of Night
D. Never	O. Life Outside
E. Tune	P. Awesome
F. Optics	Q. Remit
G. Tutu	R. Item
H. Hutch	S. Nene
I. Essex	T. Doris
J. Fury	U. Alchemy
K. Axes	

"In pity to our sex sure you were sent, that we might love and yet be innocent. For sure no crime with thee we can commit; or if we should, thy form excuses it."—(Aphra) Behn, "To The Fair Clarinda"

Gay & Lesbian Studies

Same-Sex Marriage: The Moral and Legal Debate
edited by Robert M. Baird & Stuart E. Rosenbaum
Prometheus Books
ISBN 1573921297
paperback $16.95, 242 pp.

The debate over same-sex marriage is about many things: love, power, morality, knowledge, children, and wedding presents are just a few of them. The editors of **Same-Sex Marriage** believe the debate is, perhaps more than anything else, about democracy. Since Alexis de Tocqueville gave a name to tyranny of the majority in the 19th century, commentators have been worrying about how to protect minority freedoms against the overwhelming force of majority rule and mass opinion. Baird and Rosenbaum suggest that this minority/majority tension is a useful way of thinking about same-sex marriage: a minority of citizens wants something the majority is not inclined to give. They believe that what is at stake is nothing less than the character of American culture.

As a strategy for introducing the marriage debate to a general audience, this approach has real advantages. It is clear and comprehensible. It defines the marriage debate not as a peripheral diversion staged by extremists obsessed with sexuality, but as a conversation about the core values of democratic culture. Although their calls for liberal pluralism and respect rest on the shaky ground of universal rationality, the editors are at least trying to show that freedom to marry is indeed about freedom as well as about marriage.

The book reprints several key documents. The Defense of Marriage Act, passed by Congress in January 1996, shocks with its stunning simplicity. Also included are excerpts from the Hawaii Supreme Court decision in

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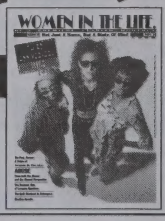
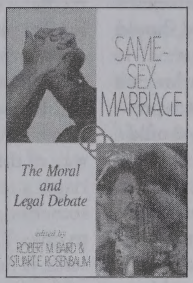


Reviews

Baehr v. Levin and the case against same-sex marriage from the Hawaii Commission on Sexual Orientation and the Law, a body charged with advising the state legislature.

Arguments for and against same-sex marriage—some quite strong, others embarrassingly weak—comprise the heart of the book. (There is also a brief section devoted to personal testimonies, but its rationale is vague and it might have been eliminated without loss.) In this dispute, according to the editors, there are three parties. Gay radicals equate marriage with oppressive tradition and reject it as incompatible with social justice. Rank and file gays want the right to marry because their desires for normal lives prompt them to demand equal opportunity and social recognition. Finally, most heterosexuals find same-sex marriage personally distasteful, politically objectionable, or both, which makes them conservative.



The problem is that one can hardly discern reliable boundaries between radical and conservative positions in these essays. Is marriage a way for gays to sign onto the status quo? Yes and no. Subvert it? Yes and no. That ambiguity is what makes the debate so compelling and informative.

While Andrew Sullivan argues that marriage is good because it is stabilizing, some thinkers have pronounced gay marriage worth supporting precisely because of its potential to revise the gender codes embedded in kinship. Nan Hunter's work comes to mind, and incorporating a voice like hers, feminist and pro-marriage, would have improved the book. This is especially true because *Baehr* concluded that sex (not sexual preference) was a suspect legal category, meaning that Hawaii would have a hard time showing that marriage statutes restricting marriage to men/ women pairs were constitutional. As the book stands, gender equality is presented as an issue relevant chiefly to the anti-marriage forces: feminist radicals at war with patriarchy and pro-family conservatives who believe that only heterosexual marriage is conducive to child welfare. Paula Ettelbrick insists that sexist ideals so infuse marriage that same-sex unions would be an obstacle to liberation, while opponents of the Hawaii ruling speculate that mothers might actually lose custody if gay ex-husbands relied on the authority of marriage licences. (In this Orwellian view, heterosexual marriage is the oldest equal rights relationship in law and society.)

It is equally obvious that religious arguments can be made for, as well as against, gay marriage. In the hands of Catholic theologian Daniel Maguire, for example, same-sex marriage emerges as a school of holiness. Attorney Dwight Penas even proposes that Puritan covenant theology venerated the qualities of dignity, equality, and communalism, the very qualities needed to vanquish the anti-marriage party. John Cotton may be turning in his grave, but Penas nevertheless provides an object lesson in the malleability of religious rhetoric.

By reducing a complex controversy to a tug-of-war between minority and majority rights, the editors make the marriage debate palatable and familiar. But the exchange cannot end where **Same-Sex Marriage** does. There should be room to pursue what Baird and Rosenbaum overlook: how clumsy our conventional conceptual vocabulary is, and how misleading the dichotomous choices between tradition and change, individual freedom and social stability, minority rights and majority rule. Movement beyond these categories is well underway among participants in the marriage debate, and this may ultimately be the most important contribution they make to democratic theory and practice.

—Ellen Herman

Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South
edited by John Howard
New York University Press
ISBN 0814735606
paperback $18.95, 402 pp.

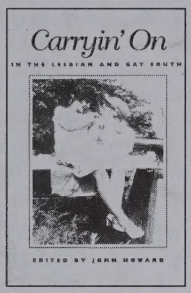
The South has long been ignored when it comes to gay and lesbian studies—most likely because people think they already know the history of homosexuality below Mason and Dixon's Line. For those who didn't grow up there, (and even for some who did), the "common knowledge" of lesbian and gay experience in the South could be boiled down to universal persecution, tough women in the bayou, and drag queens flittin' about in town.

Fortunately for those who appreciate thoughtful and well-researched history, John Howard has put together **Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South**, an impressive collection of essays that covers a broad range of time periods, subject matter, and regional variation. Howard, who is Director of the Center for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Life and an Instructor of History at Duke University, has enlisted the contribution of some of our Community's most familiar historians—and many who will become more familiar as their careers progress.

Each of these researchers has their own unique approach to the stories they tell. It might be Martin Duberman revealing the very surprising contents of letters between two men in South Carolina in 1826: "I feel some inclination to learn whether you yet sleep in your Shirt-tail, and whether you yet have the extravagant delight of poking and punching a

writhing Bedfellow with your long fleshen pole—the exquisite touches of which I have often had the honour of feeling?" Or it might be the more sociological approach of Daneel Buring, as she carefully looks at the building of lesbian community in Memphis from the 1940s through the 1960s.

What surprises most in these articles is the enormous diversity of homosexual experience in the American South, depending on time, place, race and economic status. The South Carolina gentlemen mentioned above seemed to show very little shame or regret about their poking and prodding one another with their 'fleshen poles.' In post-Civil War Georgia, Elizabeth Knowlton—through the story of Rebecca Alice Baldy—describes a place and time when there was an oversupply of unmarried women, and so this 'steel magnolia' had to become her family's breadwinner, travelling to where work was available, and along the way developing a close, lifelong relationship with another woman.



By the turn of the 20th century, wealthy and powerful straight men in New Orleans were paying good money to see the whores of Storyville at one of the "French Houses," where "the 'dyke act' was a staple of the nightly circus shows," while these same men's daughters, chaste and virginal, were cuddling in bed together as part of their collegiate experience at nearby, all-female Newcomb College. By the 1950s and '60s in Florida, the 'circus' had moved into the legislative chamber where the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee held its statewide witch hunt for homosexuals employed at public schools, colleges, and universities. (One instructor was even investigated because "he wore Bermuda shorts on campus.")

Such examples of engaging, shocking, and infuriating tidbits from our shared past can be found on most of **Carryin' On**'s four-hundred pages. Along the way some fascinating questions are raised about the nature of gay society in the region and the interrelated way social trends develop. For example, in his article "The Library, the Park, and the Pervert: Public Space and Homosexual Encounter in Post-World War II Atlanta," John Howard makes a very interesting case that it was the rise of the automobile that brought public attention to the "problem" of gay men cruising public parks after dark. Many of these essays point to the importance of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and '60s in convincing gay men and lesbians that they too deserved equal treatment. Finally, Meredith Raimondo's excellent article on "Place and the Social Construction of AIDS" contributes a different perspective on how we as a society have viewed the epidemic.

Any reader who appreciates historical research and writing needs to add **Carryin' On** to their bookshelf. And, as editor Howard states in his introduction:

> I hope this book will engage you, the reader, in a discussion with thiscollection of writers; and if not discussion, then dispute. Challenge us,take offense, write us, write for others, react. Or scrap our work and we'll start all over, if you choose. We've got much ground yet to cover. It's a task that none of us can do singlehandedly.

With a work like **Carryin' On** in print, the task can only get easier.

—Wayne Curtis

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Reviews

The Best of *The Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review*
edited by Richard Schneider, Jr.
Temple University Press
ISBN 1566395968
hardback $27.95, 363 pp.

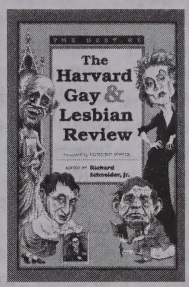
You've got to like the *chutzpah* of a journal that puts out an anthology of its best stuff when it's been publishing only since 1994.

The Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review (*HGLR*), in its **The Best of**, takes pains to dissociate itself from Harvard itself; although the journal grew out of a gay and lesbian student group there, the university does not publish it. There is no similar disavowal with regard to the *New York Review of Books* (*NYRB*), and you can't read these pieces—or look at the accompanying, exceedingly Levine-like caricatures by Charles Hefling—without being reminded of the Manhattan heavyweight. Not that there's anything wrong with that: something gay, lesbian, and in the same league as the *NYRB* would give me unadulterated joy.

On the evidence of this volume, the main difference between the two publications is *élan*. **The Best of** is an installment in a series called American Subjects. In his "series foreword," Robert Dawidoff contrasts the polemical quality of much post-Stonewall writing with "the restrained gait of critical intellectual exchange." But one man's restrained gait is another's poky shuffle, and while the *NYRB* finds professors who can write catholically and entertainingly, **The Best of** is, in contrast, sedate.

Ira Tattelman's architectural approach to "The Rise and Fall of the Gay Bathhouse" leaves the towels on. Even Camille (The Knife) Paglia tones down her superheated rhetoric in a gentlewomanly piece about what makes a gay boy gay; and, appearing in an interview, that round-the-clock fire-breather Larry Kramer is less polymorphously enraged than usual. It's nice for once, though, to see Kramer called to account for one of his scattershot diatribes. Asked if he regrets having referred to AIDS Project Los Angeles and the Gay Men's Health Crisis as Dachau and Auschwitz, he replies, "When I say they are Auschwitz, I mean that they are literally helping people to die and are not fighting to keep people alive." If that's what Kramer thinks Auschwitz was about, he's into Holocaust denial.

There are exceptions. Holly Hughes writes movingly about what it was like to be one of the "NEA Four;" Chandler Burr brings to life the quest for a biological basis to homosexuality in a piece on geneticist Dean Hamer; Tony Kushner presents "Three Screeds from Key West," which include the attention-getting confession that, for all its devastation and despair, AIDS has supplied gay writers with "great material;" Andrew Holleran wittily analyzes Michel Foucault and skewers the "pretentious" academic prose of Foucault interpreter David Halperin. (Poor Halperin: he's also been the butt of Paglia at her most scathing, in an essay-review of another of his books in her **Sex, Art, and American Culture**.)



Occasionally, that "restrained gait" is perfectly suited to its subject matter, as in Reed Woodhouse's thoughtful "Five Houses of Gay Fiction," which erects broad but useful categories for gay-male fiction, makes astute remarks about authors and books, and does not shrink from evaluating: Woodhouse esteems Christopher Isherwood's **A Single Man** and Holleran's **Dancer from the Dance** and downgrades Stephen McCauley's **Object of My Affection** for its "squeamishness" about gay life.

Also in the style of the *NYRB*, the *HGLR* holds written debates, two of which appear in **The Best of**. One of these works, the other doesn't. The first, between gay Congressman Barney Frank and Log Cabin Republican honcho Rich Tafel, raises the question of which of the two major parties gays and lesbians should support. Although Tafel has the more complex case to make—he argues that, even though Democrats are better on the issues, supporting Republicans can make sense as a way of obtaining leverage—he does it well, and the reader is given enough context to make up his/her own mind.

Not so with the other exchange, featuring David Bergman and Bruce Bawer discussing the latter's book **A Place at the Table**. In an open letter to Bawer, Bergman lacerates the book and its author: "Uptight, prim, stiff, you can't enjoy the great spectacle of human difference and variety even as you proclaim the utmost respect for individuality." In reply, Bawer accuses Bergman of having penned "by far the most systematically dishonest and unfair account of the book that I've seen, excepting perhaps the six-page attack by a reactionary Catholic priest in *National Review*." Sounds promising, doesn't it? But unless you have **A Place at the Table** quite fresh in mind, it is almost impossible to decide between these competing exegeses, and the debate never really gets off the launching pad.

Though it's a close call, I don't think there's enough material here to warrant a **Best** book yet. And what we have tends to be awfully well-behaved. I have a suggestion for curing that: change the journal's name to the *Chico State Gay & Lesbian Review*. Without all that Ivied mystique to live up to,

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Reviews

gays and lesbians—even those of the academic orientation—would be free to kick back and write the sparkling prose we all know they are capable of.

—Dennis Drabelle

Toward The New Degeneracy: An Essay
by Bruce Benderson
Edgewise Press, Inc.
09646446633
paperback $10.00, 63 pp.

Bruce Benderson's locale is the terrain of the Other, in this case, the criminal world of the impoverished which he believes is the most fertile ground for artistic and sexual experimentation, and the necessary place for gay culture to thrive. His critique of our failure as a culture, oftentimes provocative and convincing, just as frequently gets bogged down in generalities. Using three works of social and cultural criticism, Max Nordau's **Degeneration** (1895), Norman Mailer's **The White Negro** (1957), and Oscar Lewis' **La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family In The Culture Of Poverty** (1966), Benderson champions the relationship between artistic creativity and the fluid morality which he believes characterizes the underclasses. Seeking to "restore id to the creative act. His perverse yet courageous goal is to invent a 'new degeneracy'."

He confuses the oppressiveness of political correctness with genuine attempts to expand definitions of self, sexuality, and family; and with fair and reasonable expectations to teach both science and religion. His description of the 1960s as an essentially middle-class movement which through the consumerist "celebration of spontaneity and pleasure in things that had mass appeal," led to the current general malaise, mediocrity, and national obsession with spectacle and vice is brilliant. However, he stereotypes African-Americans and other disenfranchised groups as people who willingly resort to criminality and perversity as if there was no innate goodness in human beings, and as if these practices are widespread and common in the poor.

Benderson seems to think that poverty is by nature pleasure-oriented and anti-work rather than a struggle to survive. His romanticizing becomes tiresome very quickly and weakens his argument. He blinds himself to those avant-garde artists who have not embraced criminality and immorality and achieved much, such as Gertrude Stein, Walt Whitman, the Objectivists, and the Black Mountain Poets. The reader begins to feel a conflict within Benderson's soul. Coming from the middle class, he just can't let go of it. Jean Genet transcended his culture to make degeneracy into art. The Beats embraced traditional spirituality in new ways in order to overcome their middle class values. Benderson seems bent on glorifying self-destructiveness without authentic transcendence.

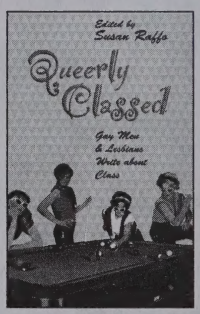
Some aspects of gay culture may indeed be threatened by assimilation, but assimilation has through the ages brought powerful, lasting, and interesting changes to human culture. I, too, believe that the true artist looks outside the safety of norms for inspiration and guidance. But I also understand how important it is to belong, to have peace and security in one's life—and that those impulses are more widespread than the artist's impulse to experience alternate realities. That's why we artists do what we do.

Gay culture, though certainly a culture of artfulness and artifice, is also a culture of human beings from all walks of life seeking to belong. Benderson's essay should be read for what it can teach gay artists about the need to stretch themselves beyond the mainstream which threatens gay art, but it should also be taken as an argument sincere in its concern for restoring and fostering creativity, but misguided in the parameters which it embraces.

—Jeffery Beam

Queerly Classed: Gay Men and Lesbians Write About Class
edited by Susan Raffo
South End Press
ISBN 0896085619
paperback $17.00, 268 pp.

Susan Raffo describes our (dis)jointed community in **Queerly Classed: Gay Men and Lesbians Write About Class**. Raffo leans heavily towards the working-class perspective. She gives a group whose voices are often obscured by a lack of privilege a wide space to discuss their class and queer perspectives. The result is an ethnically and topically diverse look at various working class experiences. In the process, many of the authors transcend what our culture and economy teach us about the working class.

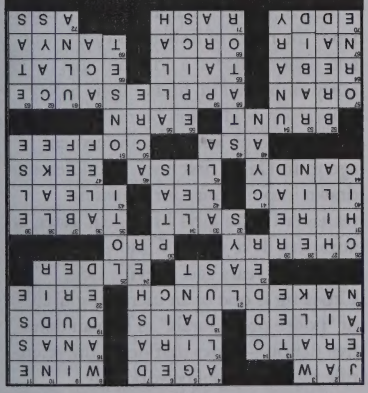


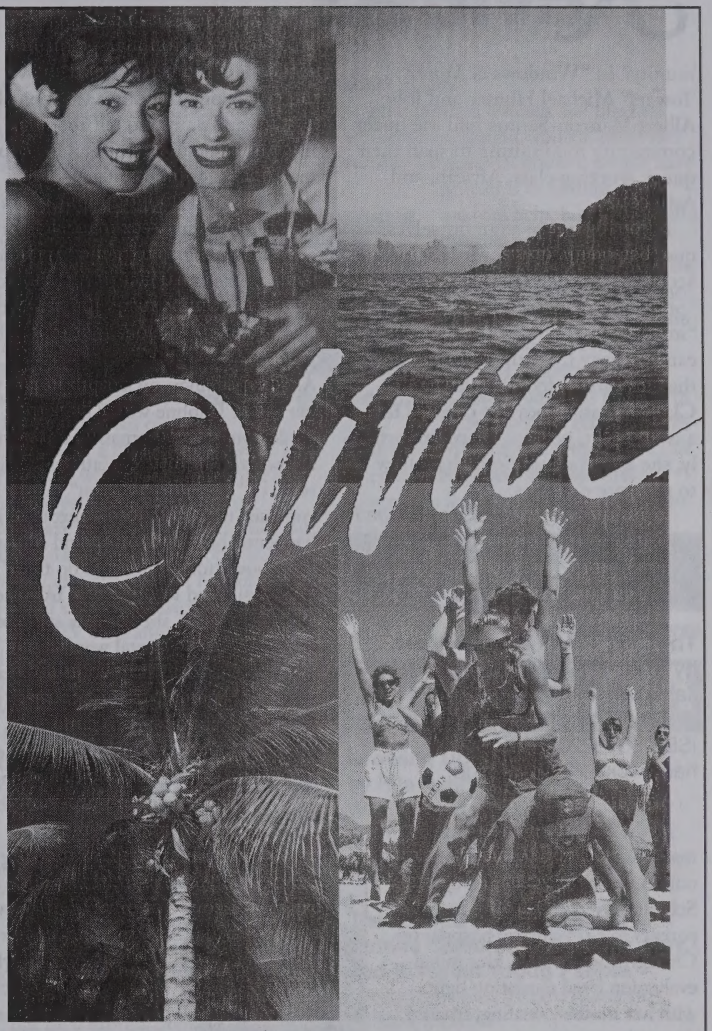
In Victoria A. Brownworth's essay entitled "Life in the Passing Lane" she discusses two points that pervade **Classed**: the significance of how we describe ourselves and the significance of how we are described. For instance, in "Spirit and Passion" Carmen Vazquez describes her morning ritual of getting dressed. Rather than outline a generic uniform—blouse, skirt, and pumps for women or button-down business shirt and dress pants for men—she describes her clothes in terms of labels, from her Calvin Klein briefs to her Urban Canvas tie to her Roma Uomo scent. Yet while many queers could identify her as "butch," and those in

the mainstream would see her as "masculine," all would probably miss that she is working class. We *see* her as she presents herself, in the guise of label-conscious yuppy. Alternatively, Brownworth makes the point that although she didn't "look" poor and didn't "look" lesbian while she was growing up, she was certainly both. Her mother taught her to shun a working class appearance. She took this lesson further to subsume her lesbian identity.

How do we then navigate the sometimes opposite worlds of class and queerness? Despite the eroticism associated with both the male and female working classes, as William Mann describes in "A Boy's Own Class," it is seen as "unfortunate" by those in the "exalted" classes to have "humble" origins. Believing that there is only one way to be gay, many queers struggle to identify their world alliances. Are we queer or are we working class? Are we gay or queer? As gays, we know we are different from the straight world. As queers, we are less restricted to class and gender demands. In fact, we are simultaneously afforded and denied different access to gender construction, employment opportunities, and life plans. So what do we do? Do we align ourselves with the queer com-

WordGaymes Solved





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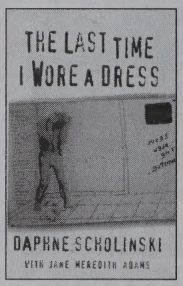
munity? In "Windows & Water Towers" Michael Hunter and John Albert Manzon-Santos find the queer community too limiting to span their queer, working class, African, and Asian lives.

Despite how we align ourselves, queers are still commonly labeled according to such familiar terms as "privilege," "gentrification," and "immorality." The fact is, few of us can get away from these perceptions that are often used against us. In **Classed** Raffo does not offer us the answers, but, perhaps more importantly, she asks the questions that allow us to navigate our lives.

—Stacey Whitmire

TRANSGENDER

The Last Time I Wore a Dress
by Daphne Scholinski and Jane Meredith Adams
Riverhead
ISBN 1573220779
hardback $23.95, 211 pp.



At the age of fifteen, when many baby dykes are busy crushing out on their best friends, Daphne Scholinski was committed by her parents to a psychiatric hospital on Chicago's South Side. Her initial evaluation cited escalating fights with her mother, stealing, truancy, depression, and involvement with drugs and alcohol as the reasons for her committal. Daphne was a not untypical teenager in trouble whose middle class parents turned to an institution for help when their daughter got out of control. What neither Daphne nor her parents suspected was that the doctors would not look to her troubled family history for the key to her problems but instead focus on her failure to act like a normal girl.

Diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder, she was held in various institutions until 1984 when she turned eighteen. She was released with a high school diploma, a history as a mental patient, and a story to tell about the harmful "treatment" she and many other teenagers had undergone.

The Last Time I Wore a Dress is Daphne Scholinski's triumphant story about surviving the mental health industry at its worst. Co-written with reporter Jane Meredith Adams, the book deftly traces the disruptions in family life that lead to Daphne's institutionalization. Always a tomboy, on shopping trips with her father Daphne would often get hauled out of the woman's bathroom by an indignant clerk. Her father's ironic reply of "That's not my son" further confused the clerk, so the next time it happened he slapped her hand and said "Bad boy, I told you not to do that."

Interspersed with sections from her medical records, she tells the story of growing up in a mental ward with anorexic patients who counted the calories from licking stamps in their daily logs, but were clearly "normal" girls and thus entrusted with teaching Daphne how to wear makeup. (She was enough of a baby butch to be mistaken for Kevin Bacon by swooning teenage girls!) The doctor's suspicions about Daphne's gender presentation were sparked by school files which listed her stated third grade career goals as police officer or construction worker. Once diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder, she became the target for "treatments" designed to make her into a more appropriate female. Makeup was a must, so was appropriate behavior towards boys. Failure to comply meant suspension of privileges: no going outside, no walking down the hall without an aide.

Eventually, the thinly veiled threat of lesbianism came closer to the surface as Daphne's close friendship with another girl her age was deemed inappropriate and potentially dangerous for both patients. However, her eighteenth birthday meant the end of the insurance money, one million dollars of which had been spent in three years, and Daphne was released. She now contends that Gender Identity Disorder is diagnosed in no small part for the financial advantage of the institutions themselves, with hospitals and doctors attempting to cure patients of gender nonconformance out of a potent combinations of homophobia and greed.

In many ways **The Last Time I Wore a Dress** is the classic success story of an underdog's triumph over formidable opposition. It belongs on the shelf with books that address the trials of youth like **A Boy's Own Story** and **Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit**. However, this is a true story of an outrage which is still being committed against youth who are perceived as different and should be read by all who would attempt to label them as such.

—Holly Fogleboch

MYSTERIES

Devil's Leg Crossing
by Kaye Davis
Naiad Press
ISBN 1562801589
paperback $11.95 174 pp.

Maris Middleton is a welcome respite from the ranks of lesbian private eyes and police officers: a criminologist previously employed in Texas Public Safety laboratory, Middleton blurs the line between sleuth and law enforcement agent. In Davis' first novel, Middleton is drawn into the hunt for a missing teenager by the girl's FBI agent sister, an attractive dyke whom Middleton met on a case two years ago. **Devil's Leg Crossing** is one of an increasing number of "police procedurals" in lesbian detective fiction—books that detail the scientific minutia of policework. But

Middleton is no lesbian Quincy. She now works out of her home and spends an equal amount of time in her lab and hanging out with her dog and friends, drinking beer and playing touch football. **Devil's Leg Crossing** reads unevenly; elaborate descriptions of fingerprints, fabrics, and bloodstains seem wasted among a cast of simpletons. And an audience expecting antagonism between lesbian investigator and the police—or if the detective is herself a cop, some acknowledgment of the difficulty in being sworn to uphold a legal system that criminalizes her existence—will be disappointed by Davis' unabashed idolatry of the Texas Rangers. But if you ever wondered exactly how DNA testing worked, and if you like a mystery with a bit of a love story thrown in, **Devils Leg Crossing** is a good place to start.

—Meredith Wood

AIDS

A Positive Life: Portraits of Women Living with HIV
Interviews by River Huston
Photographs by Mary Berridge
Running Press
ISBN 076240244X
paperback $17.95, 118 pp.

A Positive Life: Portraits of Women Living with HIV is likely the world's first coffee-table book about women and HIV. The lush, full-page photographs by award-winning photographer Mary Berridge portray women, and often their children, in their kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, back yards and neighborhoods. The interviews were conducted by River Huston, a poet, journalist, educator and activist who was diagnosed with HIV in 1991.

Huston and Berridge have photographed and interviewed women aged 25 to 48. Most of the women have children, and most (21) were infected through unprotected sex with men. Three were infected by dirty needles, one from a blood transfusion, while five weren't sure how they got it.

While some of the women were recently diagnosed with HIV, it is interesting to note that one woman sero-converted as long ago as 1982, while the nine women who were infected more than ten years ago were still in relatively good health, as were most of the women infected in the 1990s. Life goes on, but living with a life-altering disease like HIV adds to whatever emotional, financial and physical struggles women already have. Family squabbles, marriage break-up, raising children, job loss, lack of money, the drudgery of housekeeping, illness and exhaustion happen to everyone, but HIV adds another dimension. Will I live to see my children grow up? Will my new boyfriend leave when he finds out I'm HIV positive? How will I pay for the drugs I need? Should I have another child? Am I tired because I'm sick or because I've got too much to do?

from A Positive Life

The women in **A Positive Life** speak of their shock at being diagnosed HIV positive and about the sense of betrayal they feel because they were infected by the men they love. They speak of the fear of discrimination, especially against their children, some of whom are also HIV-positive. Their prospects are uncertain, but they express hope for the future.

However, it is disappointing that none of the thirty women who are portrayed in the book are bisexual or lesbian. But we know that bisexual women and lesbians do contract HIV, either from using dirty needles, receiving tainted blood while being transfused, having sex with infected men, being raped, through artificial insemination, and sometimes from having sex with each other. It would have been interesting to see portraits of lesbians in **A Positive Life**, and to hear about how our experiences are similar to and different from our heterosexual counterparts.

HIV positive lesbians and bisexual women, like straight women, often feel terribly isolated. All positive people have problems in finding good medical help, but lesbians and bisexual women must also deal with homophobia within the medical and social service systems, not to mention family rejection and often, the lack of a support network. These issues, plus the dearth of research on HIV transmission between women and the scarcity of safer sex education materials directed toward the lesbian and bisexual communities, should have been included in **Portraits of Women**. After all, straight women aren't the only women to lead a positive life.

—Jackie Manthorne

CHILDREN/YA

Growing Up Gay
by Rita Reed
W.W. Norton
ISBN 0393316599
paper $19.95, 128 pp.

The Shared Heart: Portraits and Stories Celebrating Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Young People
Photographs by Adam Mastoon
William Morrow
ISBN 0688149316
hardback $25.00, 87 pp.

Despite the fact that some of us say we're tired of coming-out stories, coming out is undeniably one of the experiences that binds us firmly together. As both these books demonstrate, it involves far more than "How I told my parents" or "The first time I had sex." It's also about recognizing one's specific queer identity and forming one's relationship with oneself and with the world at large. And it's the culmination of the feelings, thoughts, and experi-

Reviews

ences that have simmered in us since birth. In that way, each person's coming-out story is unique, even though its general outline is probably similar to that of others.

Both **Growing Up Gay**, in which two teenagers tell their stories in depth, and The Shared Heart, which gives us glimpses of the stories of 40 young people, are illustrated with photos that emphasize their subjects' individuality.

In her introduction to **Growing Up Gay**, Minneapolis Star-Tribune photographer Rita Reed divulges that her own youth in the strait-laced 50s and 60s, plus the liberation she felt when she finally came out and her horror at the 1989 suicide statistics for gay and lesbian kids, made her decide to do a feature on gay teens for her newspaper. That project led to this one, in which a young lesbian named Amy Grahn and a young gay man named Jamie Nabozny (who many of us know as the kid who sued his homophobic Wisconsin school and in 1996 won an out-of-court settlement for close to $1 million), let Reed follow their lives closely with her camera and record their stories.

Most of the 60 duotones in Reed's book are unposed; their naturalism makes one feel that one is truly witnessing Amy and Jamie's lives. The text of each one's story is written in the first person, presumably in Amy and Jamie's own words.

Amy's story starts in 8th grade when teasing and harassment led to suicide threats and self-mutilation, which in turn led to her being institutionalized. When at 15 she came out to herself and her parents, she found her parents were supportive, but even so, she was miserable enough at school to skip frequently and to leave home. After finding companionship on a rugby team and in rock climbing, and after dating and falling in love, she moved back home and got her GED—regretting, nonetheless, that she hadn't stayed in school and graduated. An epilogue updates her story to show that in June of 1996 she had a commitment ceremony with a woman who has a small son, bought a house with her, and hopes for more children and a career in firefighting, teaching, or photojournalism.

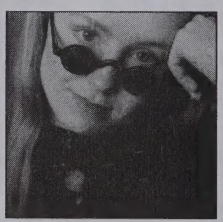
In kindergarten Jamie knew he wanted to marry a man but didn't want to be a woman. At 7, after overhearing his parents discussing a gay uncle, he realized he was gay. When he was 12, he became close to another young gay boy, who became his best friend. And not long after that his parents learned he was gay when a police officer asked him point blank in front of them. His parents said they accepted him, but both—especially his father—made it clear they were less than happy.

From junior high on, Jamie dropped out of school several times because of brutal harassment. He was taunted, pushed, thrown down and urinated on, and beaten so badly he required abdominal surgery. For a while he lived with a gay couple and a lesbian couple; he also dated, fell in love, broke up, fell in love again—and at last saw his lover welcomed into his family.

His epilogue reveals that he, like Amy, eventually passed his GED amid regrets that he didn't graduate from his high school. It tells of the lawsuit and ends with Jamie planning to study for a degree in psychology and counseling in the hopes of one day founding a safe group home for gay and lesbian runaways.

The 40 duotones in Adam Mastoon's **The Shared Heart**, which appear on right-hand pages, are posed portraits, but they are beautifully staged and beautifully rendered. Under each one is a handwritten statement about being gay by the young adult shown, followed by the subject's first name and age. Ages range from 16-23, with the majority of subjects being in their 20s. The kids are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered; most are white but not all are Anglo, and there's clearly been an attempt at ethnic and other kinds of diversity.

On each left-hand page is an essay by the young adult shown on the opposite page. The kids' stories are as varied and as similar as those of queer kids everywhere, and yet each is individual, brave, and optimistic. Their words have filled my eyes with tears and brought smiles to my lips, sometimes simultaneously, and their faces—joyful, pensive, intense, amused, friendly, strong—reassure me about our future. In his introduction, speaking of his own youth, Mastoon says "If only I'd seen and heard other kids who were experiencing similar feelings, I would have recognized myself as part of the world rather than feeling isolated and separate from it. As a gay man and as a photographer, I wanted to make visible the images that I so longed for when I was young."



Thora, from The Shared Heart

All these young people, Mastoon's 40 and Reed's 2—are, as Mastoon says "heroes for our time and role models for us all, embodying honesty and bravery as they stand up and say **"I am who I am and I love who I love."'** Both photographers are to be thanked for bringing us their stories so eloquently.

— Nancy Garden

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Early Embraces II, seeks submissions of true stories by women describing their first sexual encounter with another woman. For guidelines, send SASE to Lindsey Elder c/o Alyson Publications, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078; e-mail to mail@alyson.com. Send ms. only via snail mail with SASE. Deadline: April 30, 1998.

James White Review seeks poetry, short stories and creative non-fiction for its Fall, 1998 issue devoted to the memoir. Send queries and ms. with SASE to *James White Review*, Lambda Literary Foundation, P.O.Box 73910, Washington, D.C. 20056. Deadline: May 1, 1998.

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WordGaymes and Gaycrostic

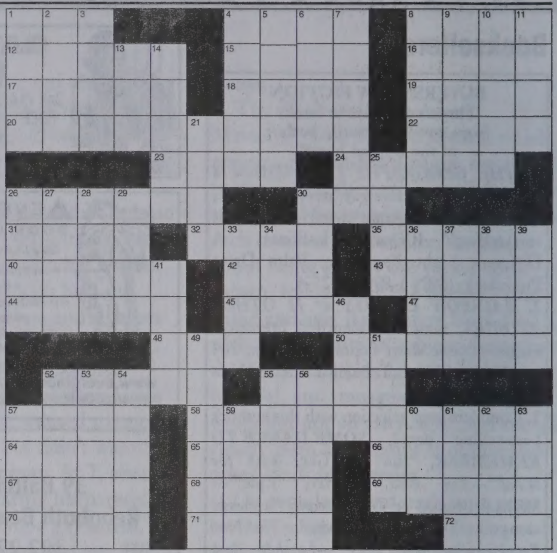
Kathleen DeBold

ACROSS

1. Chew the fat
4. Matured
8. **The Days of ____ and Roses**
12. Poetry muse
15. 100 piasters
16. Collections of sayings
17. Took ill
18. Raised platform
19. Unexploded bombs
20. William S. Burroughs' work
22. Sal's canal
23. Sunrise location
24. Pliny the _____
26. Winterson's **Sexing the** _____
30. For
31. Bring on board
32. Claire Morgan's **The Price of** ____
39. Bruce Bawer's **A Place at the** _____
40. Near the pelvic bone
42. Meadow
43. Relating to the small intestine
44. The Lady Chablis' **Hiding My** ____
45. **The Color of Winter** author Shapiro
47. Cartoon shrieks
48. Simile words
50. _____ **Will Make You Black**
52. Principle force
55. Deserve
57. Algerian port
58. June Arnold work
64. Country music diva
65. Follow
66. Brilliance
67. Popular depilatory
68. Willy, for one
69. Tucker or Roberts
70. Small whirlpool
71. With undue haste
72. Donkey

DOWN

1. Genet or Cocteau
2. Opera song
3. Stroll
4. PageMaker™ company
5. Rock Hudson film
6. Garber or Orner
7. Dancer's partner
8. Walked in water
9. Habituate
10. Lowest point
11. Latin 101 verb
13. Corinne
14. More unusual
21. Puts down
25. **Aziyadé** author Pierre ____
26. Stylish
27. Indonesian city
28. Ireland
29. Riki Anne Wilchins' ____ **My Lips**
30. School orgs
33. Actress Nazimova
34. Flower necklace
36. First letter (var)
37. Hamburger meat
38. Body of water
39. Other
41. Greenish-blue color
46. Land measure
49. Stationary part
51. Beginning
52. Wheat or rye
53. Extremely violent
54. Monadic
55. **The Iliad** and **The Odyssey**
56. Muslim deity
57. Sarah ____ Jewett
59. Prefix meaning beside
60. Back crackers' org
61. Arm bone
62. Low islands
63. Greek letters



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WordGaymes solved page 33

A. **Too Queer** author Victoria _____ 52 25 95 76 60 84 111 67 107 32

B. Engrave 114 51 89 81

C. Michael Nava mystery 20 63 35 5 9 99 69

D. "____ On A Sunday" 55 24 44 18 96

E. Broadway star Tommy ____ 61 22 2 53

F. Fiber _____ 90 3 78 97 71 118

G. Dancer's skirt 94 16 19 66

H. Low cupboard 102 117 41 86 79

I. "Elizabeth and _____" 59 12 27 68 115

J. Destructive rage 62 104 112 6

K. Fires 33 14 36 15

L. Heavy metal 77 64 43 47

M. _____ control 11 26 37 21 31 85

N. John Rechy classic 58 4 30 49 70 98 88 121 39 108 7

O. Michelangelo Signorile work 42 93 110 13 57 10 80 120 1 48 75

P. Wonderful 87 23 45 101 103 74 83

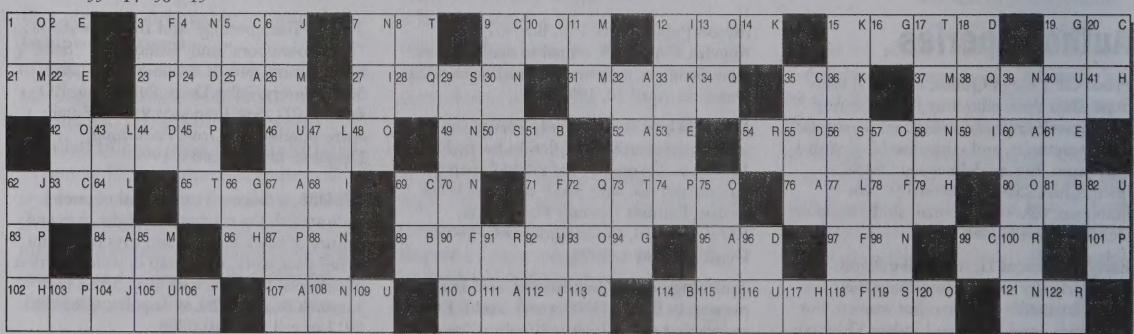
Q. Send money 72 28 113 38 34

R. Article 54 122 100 91

S. Hawaiian goose 56 119 29 50

T. Author Grumbach 106 8 17 73 65

U. Loren Cameron's **Body** _____ 46 105 116 40 82 92 109



Gaycrostic solved on page 27

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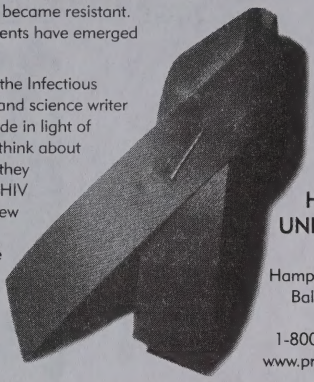

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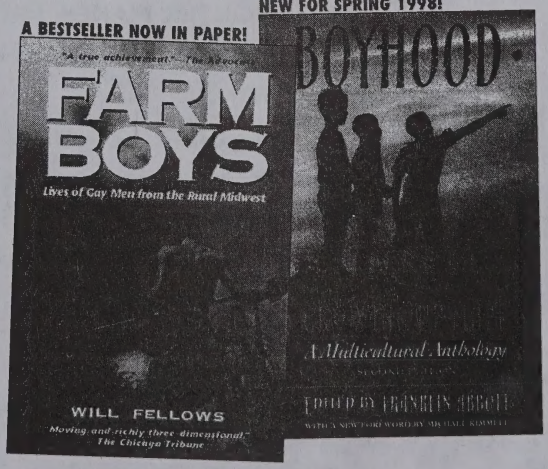

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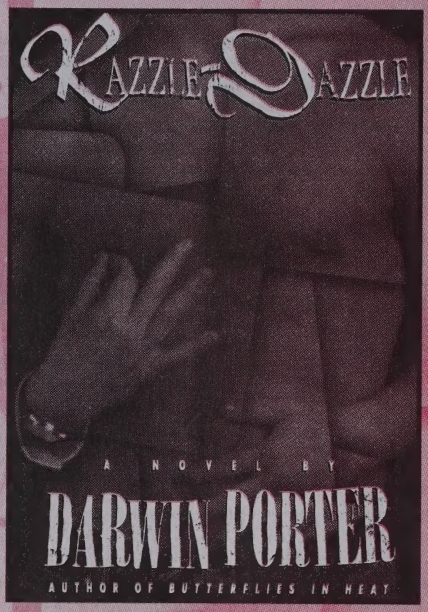

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